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THE STONES AND LOOSE TURF WERE PUSHED FROM THE OPENING, AND IN THEIR PLACE WAS
INSERTED THE HEAD OF AN ALLIGATOR.

Marsh Mose and His Dog;

OR,

THE SWAMP GUIDE.

BY WALTER NORRIS McNEIL.

CHAPTER I.

THE CAPTURE.

"FATHER, is there no hope?"

The heart of the strong man at the helm throbbed with intensified love for his child. How doubly dear, how precious were her words, for, perchance, they might never again gladden his heart on earth.

Ellinor Vannier laid her hand upon her father's arm, and again her words, low but distinct, were heard amid the din of strife, and the raging storm.

"Fear not, my father, your child has no coward heart."

As though to challenge these words, across the foaming waters sped the missile of death, falling with a sullen plash into the sea, angrily, as though enraged at being despoiled of its prey.

"My child this is no place for you."

"My place is ever beside you," replied the devoted child.

Captain Vannier pressed his child closer to his heart, as though to shield her, with his life, from the terrible impending evils. His only one, whom he had guarded so tenderly, lest, perchance, the gentle winds of heaven might visit her all too roughly, to meet a fate like this! The agonized father groaned in bitterness of spirit.

Another flash and report followed. Now, with unerring and deadly precision, the projectile fell, and the deck was shattered by the force of falling masts.

"This assures me of our fate, dear father. We shall die together!" cried the brave girl.

For many hours the doomed vessel had, "like a thing of life," fled before her pursuers. The men had worked with desperation, for in the possibility of escape lay their only hope; but now their labors ceased, and the lightning's lurid glare revealed faces whose every feature portrayed despair, yet resolute, withal, as the faces of men who shrink not at the approach of death.

One of their number, a weather-beaten seaman, approached Captain Vannier, as, with his child still clasped in his arms, he stood amid the darkness and desolation, and in tones as even as though the decks were clear, the sea calm, and he were about to announce an ordinary fact, he said:

"She's disabled, sir."

Then he stood respectfully, as though awaiting orders.

"Ah, Will Brande, faithful to the last. They have all done nobly; tell them 'tis useless now," said Captain Vannier. He felt a reproach that even in his great anguish he had for a moment forgotten his noble crew. There was a moisture on his bronzed cheek, as Will Brande turned away, but his "Ay, ay, sir," was delivered in

prompt tones, and his usual salutation of respect, although lost in the darkness, was not omitted.

Again the disabled ship received a volley, and reeled to and fro under the force of the terrific concussion, while every wave threatened instant destruction. The lightning's flash for a moment illuminated the scene, and showed their pursuer with appalling distinctness—the armed men, eager for their prey, the death-dealing cannons upon her deck; while upon her dark sides, and seemingly blazoned in letters of fire, was her name, "Ocean Scourge." Eagerly as she had before sought tidings of hope, Ellinor Vannier now sought tidings of a fate which would save her from these captors—less merciful than the remorseless waves.

"Will Brande, you have been kind and truthful to me, always," she said, earnestly. "Tell me, now, must the pirate reach us ere we die?"

"I've never sailed alongside that craft under false colors, and can't do it now she's in foul weather," soliloquized Will. Then he replied, aloud: "You see, miss, the wind and sea that only beats us about, helps her on. We may float some time yet, and she'll be here in less than that. Leastways, that's my 'pinion."

"Heaven grant that I may die thus," murmured the gentle girl, and, as a child seeking refuge, she drew closer within her father's embrace."

But the strong arms that encircled her relaxed, then fell nerveless by his side, and Captain Vannier sunk lifeless upon the deck, while the warm blood, gushing from a wound in his breast, deluged the face and neck of his child. With a cry of horror and despair Ellinor lost all consciousness of surrounding terrors.

"If the cap'n's gone, it's my duty to take his place, as well as I can; leastways, that's my 'pinion," said Will Brande, as he raised Ellinor Vannier in his arms.

At this moment a ludicrous feature was added to the scene, if "ludicrous" anything could be termed in connection with a moment of such terror.

"Och, murther!" exclaimed a voice, in unmistakably Hibernian accents, "an' is it yerself, Miss Ellinor, darlint, that's goin' to stay there wid de murtherin' cannons, and be kilt intirely? Howly Moses, and all the blissid saints! Whin we've sailed clane through Chaney and the Injy says, and the great S'ary Desirt, itself, to come to this, intil this baste ov a say."

"Bridget, your screamin' is worse than the roar of the cannons," exclaimed Will Brande.

"Yis, faith, and it's yees that's always a givin' of yer advice, and never follerin' of it yerself at all," was the retort.

"This is no time for words, Bridget."

"Then," interrupted Bridget, "why don't the mather or the swate young leddy spake a word, whin it's meself that's kilt wid fright?"

Will made no reply.

"Then it's kilt *they* are intirely. Och hone the day!"

With this exclamation, Bridget fell prone upon the deck, uttering a series of shrieks, sufficiently appalling to strike terror to any human heart. On came the pirate ship. Lights gleamed upon her deck, and when Will Brande, practiced seaman though he was, thought that with one more

wave the wreck would be annihilated, she lay alongside, and the deck of the sinking vessel swarmed with her crew. But the bloodthirsty spirit of pursuit had nearly deprived them of a rich booty. A few only of the most daring ventured to secure a small portion of the treasures, in gold and merchandise, with which the vessel was laden. Tempting as was the booty, they were compelled to leave it; not, however, without many imprecations of rage and disappointment.

Brave, when bravery was worse than vain, Will Brande held the inanimate form of his captain's daughter in his arms, determined to defend her with his life. But, felled by a shower of blows, the faithful seaman soon lay insensible beside the bleeding form upon the deck, and Ellinor Vannier was borne away. Bridget had remained paralyzed by terror, and seemingly unobserved in the confusion; but now, influenced by a new terror—that of being left to perish on the wreck—she started to her feet, and again gave utterance to the most piercing shrieks.

"An' it's yees that w'u'd be afther l'avin' me behint wid de say, an' carryin' off me young leddy, the blissing of me life, before me very eyes, ye thaivin' pirates," she exclaimed, vehemently.

One of the villains paused, seemingly amused by her grief and ludicrous exclamations, and said:

"It would be a pity to carry off the angel and leave the devil. You must be the shrieking devil, and we'll have all sorts for a variety."

"No more a divil nor yerself, barrin' it's me-self that's a Christian woman, an' yer a hay-then; but ye can call me the divil or a blissid saint itself, Mr. Pirate, if ye'll only take me along wid me leddy."

Thus, amid alternate reproaches and entreaties, Bridget was conveyed on board the pirate ship.

CHAPTER II.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

A FEW hours previous to the scenes portrayed in the foregoing chapter, the merchant ship, "Ellinor," was, seemingly under the most favorable auspices, proceeding on her voyage, "homeward bound." As though reluctant to hide the beauties of the gorgeous ocean sunset, the angel of night slowly spread her mantle over the earth, so slowly that each deepening shadow but added a softer tint to the gently-fading scene.

Captain Vannier trod the deck, a proud and happy man. Beside him was his joy, his only treasure; for, considered beside his fair child, the father counted his wealth on land and at sea, as naught. She was peerless in his eyes; to him the rays of the setting sun, reflected on the ocean's broad expanse, were not so bright as the golden threads of her hair, nor were the depths of ocean as blue as those eyes, ever beaming with affection.

'Tis said the darkest night precedes the brightest day. May not the fairest day portend the darkest hours of night? Do not the blessings, the pleasures of life become dearer, priceless, in the foreshadowing of dark events at hand?

Captain Vannier deemed this the happiest hour of his life. His daughter, too, seemed gayer even than was her wont. She spoke of distant lands they had visited, dwelt with rapture on the scenes of beauty and grandeur they had beheld. Then, as the sun sunk and twilight deepened, she spoke in low tones of their old cottage home in her dear native land, around which clustered tender memories of the "angel mother, not lost, but gone before." She slept now in the village churchyard, and her child longed to know if the rose-tree she had planted there bloomed on the consecrated spot.

Then, when she saw her father's face saddened by the memory of joys lost to him forever, she strove to call the smiles again.

"There, papa, I will have no sighs now," she said, with a pretty assumption of willfulness. Then in a moment she added; "There will be a change of weather, papa."

"Since when did my Ellinor become a prophetess?" asked Captain Vannier, smiling at her affectionate ruse for diverting his thoughts.

"This moment, on looking at our weatherwise Will Brande."

Captain Vannier joined his mate, who stood, glass in hand, apparently absorbed in the contemplation of some distant object.

"What is it, Will?—a cloud?" he asked.

"Yes, cap'n, two on 'em," replied Will.

"Two!" ejaculated Captain Vannier, as his practiced eye swept the horizon.

"I see but one, Will, in reality as small as a man's hand," he said.

"It will be a gale, sir. But, askin' pardon, cap'n, I don't look for clouds in the heavens through them glasses. I'm lookin' for clouds on earth," replied Will.

"You are full of mysteries, Will."

Will adjusted the glass, and steadied it, saying:

"Now look, cap'n. T'other cloud's *there*."

"I see a *sail*. It is visible to the naked eye."

"Look again, cap'n," said Will.

"She has a peculiar appearance—built for fast sailing, I should say."

"Jes, so, sir. Them dark spots on her sides is port-holes, and she's a rebel pirate. Leastways, that's my 'pinion."

Will spoke in low tones. He did not wish his words to reach the ears of his captain's daughter, for Ellinor Vannier had, by some opportune act of kindness, won the heart even of the simplest seaman on her father's vessel. Will Brande had known and loved her from her earliest childhood.

Captain Vannier held the glass in silence, and Will spoke again.

"You see, cap'n, times ain't like they use to was. That ugly craft is after us. Leastways, that's my 'pinion." This was Will's favorite expletive, and delivered with much emphasis, especially when under excitement, as at present.

"You see she don't run up the old flag, cap'n."

"That looks suspicious, Will."

"I'll give the Ellinor a little more canvas. Been crowdin' sail for the last half-hour," said Will, as he turned away.

In a few moments Will returned. Captain Vannier resigned the glass to his hands, saying:

"She is evidently bearing upon us, Will. Keep a sharp lookout."

"Ay, ay, sir."

With rapid strides, Captain Vannier paced to and fro. How changed a man!

He had been long absent from his native land, and now that it was too late, he deeply regretted the temerity which had induced him to attempt the homeward voyage.

It was rather confidence than temerity, for Captain Vannier was but one of the many who, even after the commencement of hostilities, refused to believe that our unhappy land could become the scene of bloodshed which followed. There had been several outrages reported in distant waters, but even these lacked confirmation, and Captain Vannier had left Liverpool for New York, in command of his richly-freighted bark, without a misgiving concerning the danger which now threatened.

Otherwise he would never have consented that his daughter should be his companion for this voyage. A few moments since, he rejoiced in her presence as his greatest earthly blessing; now, he would have given all his wealth and wandered forth a beggar, could he have removed her far from the present scene.

Captain Vannier was a brave man, but his heart sunk within his bosom, when he considered that he was defenseless, powerless, even before his enemies. They must make every exertion, however, strain every stitch of canvas, before the coming gale. In this and approaching night lay their only possibility of escape.

Ellinor had, during her father's consultation with Will Brande, entered the saloon. This apartment was fitted with taste and elegance, and thither Ellinor usually resorted at dusk, while her attendant, the faithful but somewhat eccentric Bridget Flaherty, made preparation for the evening repast.

Bridget was the daughter of an old and faithful steward, who had lost his life in Captain Vannier's service at sea, some years previous. She had, since Ellinor's childhood, been her constant attendant. She was devoted to her mistress, and had accompanied her on several voyages. On such occasions she considered Ellinor her especial charge, and gave such advice and uttered such remonstrance as she deemed necessary.

"Shure, an' it's meself that didn't know as ye'd be afther coming in, at all, at all. Ye'll be gettin' burned as black as a nagur itself in this same say breeze, I'm thinkin'," exclaimed the faithful monitress, as Ellinor entered the saloon.

"Never mind, Bridget, it will not burn very deeply," said Ellinor, laughing, as she seated herself upon a luxurious divan.

"Only skin-dape, ye m'ane. And does the black of a nagur itself go daper than *that*, I'd like to know?"

"Come, Bridget, let's make our little saloon bright and cheerful, and set the most tempting supper possible," said Ellinor, still laughing at Bridget's original idea of color.

"How iver ye can make the swate little place nicer than *nice*, it's meself don't know, and by the same token, 'tis n'ately done, for, faith, I fixed it all meself. It's better than having those men-sarvints cl'anin' and scrapin' around,

breakin' ivery blissed thing they let fall. It's meself that'll niver let 'em in *here* at all, but kape 'em out, altogether."

"You have arranged everything very nicely, Bridget," said Ellinor, casting an approving glance around the room.

"But it's right, for all that, miss, ye know, that ye would come and see the avenin' fixin's, like ye did when we was at Chaney, that queer place, do ye mind, miss, where the paple wore tails at the back ov the'r heads, and no feet at all, none worth sp'akin' ov—but bowly saints, protect us! what iver are they doin' wid de poor ship? They're runnin' her as if she was a race coorse, or a roarin' lion itself," exclaimed Bridget.

"Perhaps they are in haste; we're homeward bound, you know."

"Home!" exclaimed Bridget. "Home in-da'-o! They're tryin' to run us ashore, it's my belair."

Ellinor stepped on deck, and approached her father.

"I cannot speak with you now, my darling."

His tones were almost stern, and her heart sickened at the expression of his countenance as he spoke. She re-entered the saloon, with an indefinite foreboding of evil, and said:

"Bridget, something terrible has occurred."

"Shure, an' I'll go and see. I'm not going to stay and be drowned in me bed, like a mad Injun itself."

Intent on her purpose, Bridget hastened to Will Brande, and asked:

"What iver's the matter *now*? We're rushin' through the say fit to split ivery b'iler—barrin' there's none to burst itself—and like to tear the sails into threads ag'in."

Will Brande made no reply, and Bridget continued, angrily:

"It's yerself standin' there like a statoo, or a mile-stone on Patience's monnymment, niver givin' an answer to a civil question. Is it the bloody pirit of the says ye'r' a-lookin' at, or the say-sarpint itself?"

Her loquacity annoyed Will exceedingly in the present instance, and he exclaimed, impatiently:

"Hold your tongue, Bridget."

"It's meself can do that same, but I'll do it out of the hearin' of the likes of ye, intirely."

"Sorry a word did I git from him at all, barrin' a civil request to hould me tongue," exclaimed Bridget, as she rejoined her mistress.

"But, let 'em sail, and whin things begin to fly off ginerally, it's meself can hold onto the mast, and no thanks to the b'astely min at all."

And Bridget coolly continued her preparations for the evening meal.

The rosy hues of twilight had long since vanished. The night deepened and darkened, as the threatened storm arose; still, they urged the frail bark on. The masts bent to the storm, and the timbers creaked, as though appealing to the human hands that guided her.

It was a mad chase, and nothing could be spared, for still there was hope, however faint, that in the darkness and storm they might escape.

And they hoped on—for to hope is but human—until, deeper than the crashing thunder, was

heard across the broad expanse of waters the cannon's sullen roar; that sound which has announced the desolation of so many homes and hearts; once heard, never to be forgotten more.

CHAPTER III.

THE PIRATE CHIEF.

ELLINOR VANNIER awoke to consciousness in the cabin of the "Ocean Scourge." Bridget sat beside the couch, with her face buried in her hands, loudly lamenting their fate.

"An' it's me own dear leddy herself that's killed wid the roar of the say an' the cannons, an' it's all along of these thaives, bad luck to 'em," she cried.

"Bridget," said Ellinor, in a low voice.

"Howly Moses! did iver a dead man spake afore?" exclaimed Bridget, starting to her feet.

"An' if it's not dead ye are, why don't ye be afther asking *where* ye are, like ivery one I've sane come out of a faint, if they *wa'n't* dead."

Ellinor's lips moved, but the emotions of her heart forbade the utterance of words.

"It's on board the pirate crew we are, bad luck to 'em," said Bridget.

"My father?"

"Och hone! sorry's the day or the night be like. Dead by this, between the say an' the pirates, dear leddy. They were fain to l'ave *me*, and meself was 'live enough. What wid the scraimin' and the fright, that kilt me intirely, it kept me spirits up, praise the howly saints," said Bridget, in dolorous tones.

"Alas, alas!" sobbed Ellinor, as her aching heart found momentary relief in tears.

"'Tis alas, an' alas, me colleen, but it's the way of the world itself. Didn't me own daddy pitch head-first into the b'ilin' say, and has he iver come out alive? L'avin' me an orphanless child entirely, at a tender age—barrin' me dear auld mother, livin' in Cork till this day—Hiven bless her."

Although the simple Bridget's words were not selected with that nicety which betokens skill in the art of condolence, her tones came from a truly sympathetic heart, and spoke volumes.

"But them that's gone, is *gone*, miss, and we're here wid the thaivish pirates. They'll be comin' here, and then what iver *will* we do it-self?"

"We must trust in Providence," replied Ellinor.

"I'll do that same, and call on the howly saints, but it's my belaiif that Providence helps thim most that helps thimselves," said Bridget.

"We cannot do that, in this dreadful extremity."

"I belaiive that same, too, not just this minit, for, as I'm a living sinner, I hear the print of a fut on the rickety auld stairs, bad luck to em."

The footstep paused, and a gentle knock was heard upon the door. Bridget, almost dumb with terror, found strength to whisper:

"Does that thafe ixpict me to open the door it-self? Divil a bit will I do that same, anyhow."

There was a momentary pause, the door turned upon its hinges. A form for a moment darkened the entrance, then the door was closed.

The rebel pirate chief stood before them.

In terror, as though she saw an apparition,

Bridget let the beads, which she had pressed convulsively in her hands, fall to the floor.

Ellinor Vannier had arisen with trembling limbs from the couch, but as she looked upon the face of her captor, all weakness, all timidity vanished. Instead of the shrinking captive, she stood a Nemesis.

The pirate chief was tall, and of commanding form, and his face might have been deemed handsome, but for the hardened lines on cheek and brow. For a moment he stood in silence and gazed upon his captive. The hardened features seemed to yield to a milder influence as he uttered her name.

"Ellinor!"

"Robert Lynne!" exclaimed Ellinor Vannier, in tones of mingled reproach and contempt.

The pirate stood before the gentle girl, with bowed head and downcast eyes, as a criminal about to receive sentence.

"Robert Lynne, what tempted you to this foul deed?"

"Why ask me, Ellinor? The cause grew with my growth, it strengthened with my strength. That cause is the only pure and holy impulse my reckless life has ever known. Ellinor, it was, it is, my love for you."

"Deem it not a holy impulse. Call it not love. Brave men protect the object of their love. Your hand has rebbed me of all I hold most dear."

"Not all, Ellinor. 'Twas this that maddened me. Your refusal, your scorn I could endure, but not that you should bestow upon another the love that you refused to me. I resolved upon the course I have pursued, and am prepared to submit to your reproaches. I will have you near me, Ellinor, and at whatever cost to myself, will know that you are not another's bride. This I have sworn. This shall be your home while I have life. Every luxury of earth shall be laid at your feet, but here is your prison-house. You shall be free from every annoyance, your word shall be my law, and, Ellinor, if your heart be not harder than marble, it must appreciate in time devotion such as mine."

"The devotion of my father's murderer! Never," she exclaimed, in a voice of suppressed emotion.

"Nay, Ellinor, you do me injustice, by my soul you do. I would have saved him if for your sake alone."

"And you left him, wounded and insensible, to perish in his helplessness. You feared to face his indignation, your prisoner though he might be, and you became his murderer," cried Ellinor.

"Ellinor, you will tempt me from the calmness I have resolved to maintain, by your maddening accusations," said the pirate chief, as the lines on his brow deepened in anger.

"If you would escape my reproaches, Robert Lynne, never again seek my presence, for you will hear naught else from my lips, murderer, traitor, that you are!" exclaimed Ellinor Vannier in tones of withering scorn.

"I will then relieve you of my presence, but think not that reproaches will deter me from my purpose. You have heard my unalterable decision, and you know me too well to deem me capable of a weakness."

With these words, the pirate chief strode from the presence of his prisoner. Ellinor had been sustained throughout the trying interview by the conflicting emotions of resentment and grief, but now she sunk almost overpowered upon her couch. Bridget had stood by in silence and astonishment.

"If iver I've saine the likes o' *that*!" she exclaimed. "To think that the great pirate is ounly Misther Robert, afther all."

"We are in the power of a cruel, relentless man, one who will not scruple to do all that he has threatened," said Ellinor, in desponding tones.

"Let him, thin, if he can, bad luck to the likes ov him. But ef he's a-thinkin' he'll kape us here all the days ov our lives, he's mistaken, he is."

"Ours is a hopeless fate," sighed Ellinor.

"Not a bit of it, jewel ov me sowl, and light ov me eyes, as ye are altogether. It's not *that* ye'r' a-comin' to. Don't ye mind the sthory books ye've read, about princesses jist like yer blissed self, wid a poor crayther—that's me—was taken by cruel Janies and things, and shet up, aven inter the middle of rocks and hills, and some other Janies, stronger and better nor the first, always com's jist in time to let 'em out, and then, the last Janie turns out to be a fine young gintleman, and they all fly away and git married, and live happy and blissid all the days ov the'r lives? I mind the time when ye used to read all them purty things, when ye was a little wee child," said Bridget, soothingly.

"This is no fairy tale," sighed Ellinor.

"It mayn't be; but for all that, they needn't stharve us to death—the haythins," said Bridget, angrily.

"How can you think of food in such an hour?" exclaimed Ellinor, reproachfully.

"Bedad, thin it's meself that don't think of it at all. It's the food and the good warm breakfast, somewhere, that's thinkin' ov me, it is, and ef they *will* kape us here, they shall kape us on the best of the land, or the say, which is all the same I take it. The morn is broad a'ready, and I'll jist go and tell 'em, ef they don't m'ane to starve us, like cannybils, as they are, it's time we had our breakfast."

"Bridget, will you go out among this lawless crew for your breakfast?"

"I'll do that same, jist, and as quick for me 'ating as anything, and it's sthrange it is, that ye'r' so fearless, and not at all fear'd whin Misther Robert's here, and so w'ake intirely, now, whin it's meself that's bowlder out of the danger. But it did me good, it did, jist tu hear ye sp'ake yer mind, and it's Bridget will do that same, for niver a hair of me head will be dare to let 'em touch, for your sake intirely. But I'll not be afther givin' *him* a chance tu come in here, with his murtherin' tongue, whin I'm not here to stand by ye. Shure I'll jist lock the door, an' give ye the kay afore I go."

"Bridget!"

"Shure, miss, what wid these thaives, and the say, I've forgot the little sense I had—I forgot I couldn't git out wid the kay in yer pocket. I'll take the kay *wid* me, and it's a blessin' to find a kay at all, in this haythen land."

Bridget's absence was but momentary. She

returned, preceding a boy, who carried a tray. She did not, however, permit him to enter, but took the tray, and scarcely allowing him an opportunity to step out of the doorway, turned the lock, with an emphasis intended to proclaim her authority.

"There, I'll jist let 'em know that whin they'll come in *here*, it'll be wid *my* turnin' ov the kay. But would ye belave it, miss, I came near runnin' over the crayther a-comin' wid this? And sure it's loaded, as the b'astely ould crayther said, wid ivery thing that grows on the land and say. Here's the coffee and the choc'lit, and ye've got to ate and drink a mite now, miss. Some pape's one thing, and some's another, and belike, they can't help it if they're not *all* alike. They can't all be good itself, and ef they was *all* pirates, there would be no good folks lift at all, to get into throuble and disthress," said Bridget, evidently softened for the moment by a contemplation of the creature comforts set before her.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ESCAPE.

Two days passed, and the captives were left unmolested in the solitude of their cabin. Ellinor was surprised and gratified that the pirate captain had not inflicted upon her his loathsome presence.

Robert Lynne, once Captain Vannier's ward, had been her childhood's playmate, her boy champion: He had guarded her with jealous care and selfish affection, which had effectually kept other companions aloof; some fearing, all disliking his cruel nature, for the gentle Ellinor was the only being he loved or feared in the wide world. When Ellinor was sent to school, then accompanied her father on his distant voyage, Robert Lynne led a wandering life.

They met occasionally, seemingly by accident, and Ellinor always welcomed him with pleasure, for she cherished a sisterly affection for the rash, impetuous youth, who had been her earliest friend.

Several years later she had been rescued from imminent peril by a stranger. The friendship thus formed became a stronger sentiment, and then Ellinor Vannier knew a deeper love than the kindly affection she had cherished for Robert Lynne. Well she remembered the violent hatred he conceived for her preserver, Frederick Armstrong. He vowed, amid mad protestations, that he would rather she had died, than that another hand should save her. He reproached her with love for her preserver, and rushed from her presence with an oath of vengeance. She had not deemed him capable of villainy so subtle, but now felt that she was in the hands of a relentless captor.

The days were passed in hopeless apathy, the nights in tears of anguish. All poor Bridget's efforts at consolation seemed unavailing. After making several attempts to draw Ellinor from her griefs, if for a moment, but with no more success than usual, she exclaimed:

"An' here it's meself, w'arein' away to the bones, intirely, along wid graif, an' ye can't spake a civil worrd to me; barrin' 'twas civil or

oncivil, little would Biddy Flaherty care, so ye'd sp'ake at all."

Her tones were of heartfelt sorrow, and she sunk upon a low seat, with a gesture of despair, which touched Ellinor's heart.

"Bridget, you must forgive me," she said.

"Forgive ye!" exclaimed Bridget. "An' what'll I be doin' that same fur? It's only to see yer graif breaks the heart ov me intirely. I call it a cryin' shame, an' a timptin' ov Providence, to jist cast yerself into graif, whin ye know ther's one, at laiste, would walk the world over, to so much as bring the leastest goust of a smile to yer face. An' if 'twas one loved Biddy Flaherty like that, she'd be as gay as a lark, in the face of all the pirates of the say itself—wouldn't she?"

Ellinor's eyes were tearful, as they rested on her companion's face, and she said:

"In the depth of my grief, I forget my blessings, my good, faithful Bridget. There is one who would save me, with his life, if need be, for the sacrifice, but the ocean rolls between us."

"Niver mind that, miss," replied Bridget, cheerfully. "There niver was a b'aste ov a say so wide and so dape that it wasn't thraveled yit, an' by the same token, there's niver a road so long but it has a turn. Ye jist be aisy, darlin', an' ef ye can't be aisy, be as aisy as ye can, till we come to that same. The murtherin' thaives thrate us better nor I ixpected—they kape away and let us alone; an' as to the 'atin', I must say they thrate us like quaines."

Bridget's broad face showed her satisfaction at this, her first successful effort to interest Ellinor; and as the evening approached, declared her intention of going upon deck for a "breath of air."

"It's jist that, miss, that kapes me life and me sperrits in me, at all, in this same murtherin' place, an' it's only fur the minit I'll be gone."

The latter clause was literally complied with, for not more than a minute elapsed, after her departure, ere Bridget returned hastily, and sunk breathless upon a seat, exclaiming:

"Howly Moses an' all the saints defend us! It's come at last!"

"What is the matter, Bridget?" questioned Ellinor, in alarm.

"Och! if we was only in Injy, or Prooshy, where the cannibals live, forninst they'll faide ye on puppies, if ye'll ate 'em, thin ate ye, itself, if ye won't let 'em; but it's meself wishes we would be there."

"Has any new misfortune occurred?" asked Ellinor.

"New! No, indade, it's an old misfortune, itself, bad luck to it, and so it is. Don't ye mind, miss, we're a-sailin' jist like we did that night whin this b'aste ov a pirate chased us, an' did ye iver know any good, but harrum itself, to come of sich runnin' over the say?"

"Are we pursued?" asked Ellinor, eagerly.

"It's pursooed we are, though whatever anybody wants wid this ould hulk ov a pirate, it's meself can't tell."

"Thank Heaven!" ejaculated Ellinor.

"Thank Hiven!—for what, I'd like to know? whin we're goin' to be killed by two pirates instead ov one! Whatever won't pable thank the Lord for nixt? I'd as soon ixpect to hear the

ould man that fell out'n the housetop an' broke his nick, cry 'Praise the howly saints,' whin he touched the ground," said Bridget, indignantly.

"It is not a pirate; it must be a man-of-war," said Ellinor.

"An' if so, a friend. But if we're kilt by friend or foe, it's all the same, it is, so we're kilt. We won't be the first that's bin kilt wid kindness; and there's another thing: we're comin' to land. I seen it betwain the sky and the say—"

"The pirate will then probably escape by running into some secluded harbor in the coming night, where her pursuer cannot follow," said Ellinor, despondingly.

Nor was she mistaken. For several hours every sail was spread, and the bustle overhead was deafening. At last, under cover of a dark night, the fugitive craft glided quietly into her harbor, and Ellinor, who had listened prayerfully, almost hopefully, threw herself, weeping, upon her couch, little suspecting how nearly she had been rescued.

In the morning, Bridget, on awakening, started to her feet in surprise, exclaiming, "Howly mother of Moses and the saints, we are stopped!"

"We have been lying at anchor several hours," said Ellinor.

"An' you've kipt awake to see it all, an' ef ye've closed yer eyes this blissid night, I'm in a doubt. But that iver we should hev stopped! Why, I kin hardly kape me faite itself, in the silence. I thought, shure, a pirate stopped niver at all, but kapes on and on, like the Wantherin' Jew in the Arabian Nights."

Breakfast was served, and, from the coffee-waiter, Bridget handed Ellinor a note. It was from Robert Lynne, soliciting the favor of an interview.

Ellinor was no dissimulator. She wrote on the reverse of this note:

"The captive cannot choose her guests."

"Faith, an' he makes as much fuss about it as ef he was goin' wher' he was wanted," exclaimed Bridget.

His approaching step was immediately heard, and as he entered the room, Ellinor rose, with an air of hauteur and contempt, which Robert Lynne had never thought her fair face and fragile figure could express.

"I am aware, Ellinor," he said, "that my absence needs neither explanation nor apology. It was to you, doubtless, a most welcome omission."

Ellinor bowed her head, but made no other reply, and he continued:

"I will, however, state my reasons, superfluous as it may seem to you. We have been pursued, and I did not wish to alarm you by informing you of the fact until the danger was passed."

"I can congratulate neither you nor myself on our escape, nor can I appreciate the mistaken kindness which kept me in ignorance of the fact that friends were at hand."

"Why your friends, Ellinor?" he asked.

"On the broad earth, all and every being I deem 'friend,' save you."

Robert Lynne's eyes flashed angrily for a moment, then he said, calmly:

"I know it, Ellinor, but has an engagement at sea no terrors from which your delicate nature shrinks? Think of the danger."

"There is no danger in anything which could release me from you," said Ellinor Vannier, unshrinkingly.

Robert Lynne gazed at the noble girl in wonder and admiration, and said:

"By Heaven! Ellinor, your nature must have changed; you, once the most timid and reliant of delicate creatures, have become a proud and defiant woman, more beautiful still, but it is a change of which I had never deemed you capable."

"Such a change, even, is possible, when men become fiends, and treachery is newly-named, *honor*," said Ellinor, bitterly.

Robert Lynne turned away, with a gesture of angry impatience, and strode from the room. At the door, however, he paused for a moment, and said:

"Bridget, I shall be absent until to-morrow. See that Miss Vannier's wants are supplied—"

"Yis, sur. Thank ye for the same, sur," said Bridget, courtesying as she closed the door.

"Bridget?" exclaimed Ellinor, reproachfully.

"Niver mind a poor crayther like me, mum. It's thrue, ivery word, an' I thank him from the bottom ov me sowl, not for the 'atin', an' sich, but for the *goin'*, 'specially as he'll stay till the mornin'. Howly saints presarve ye, miss! had ye forgot ther' was *land* on the airth?—an' it'll go hard with Bridget Flaherty—that's meself—if we don't set fut on tarry farmy afore that mornin' he spakes ov."

"Is escape possible?" questioned Ellinor, incredulously.

"Indade it is; trust Biddy for that. An' now, if ye'll ate a mite ov somethin', all day, an' belike slip away a biscuit ag'in' a time o' nade, it'll go well wid ye."

Bridget seemed so confident, that Ellinor felt herself buoyed by the possibility of escape, and the day passed in alternate hopes and fears. Bridget was on deck most of the time, coming down occasionally to urge Ellinor to eat and sleep. "For," said she, "ye didn't slape a wink the night gone, I'm thinkin', no more'n ye will the night to come."

Night came on, and Bridget brought in their supper at an early hour. She bestowed the most of it in an immense pocket, and said:

"Now, miss, I want yer diment cross ye always wears on yer neck."

"My diamond cross!" exclaimed Ellinor.

"The same that was yer mother's, miss, an' ef by her prayers 'twill be the price of yer liberty, 'twill be all the more blissid, I'm thinkin'."

"Take it, Bridget, and may her prayers attend us to-night."

At the midnight hour, a boat was lowered from the Ocean Scourge. Ellinor, trembling with apprehension, was lifted in, and Bridget, with ejaculatory supplications to all the saints, followed. The muffled oars silently plunged into the calm waters and the captives were swiftly borne toward the shore. The time that intervened seemed like an age, ere the frail bark rested on the sands.

"Tarry farmy at last!" ejaculated Bridget, as her feet touched the land, "and for that same, praise all the howly saints, 'specially the one

that's guided us the darksome night—and afther thim I'll remimber ye, and mintion ye in me prayers," she said, turning to the companion of their flight.

"Much nade I'll hev ov that same if I don't make good me retreat, so good-by, an' good luck to ye an' the leddy. I've five miles to row yit afore moonrise."

Silently, as it had come, the boat glided away.

"I had not a word to thank our preserver," murmured Ellinor.

"Niver mind that same, miss. I've paid him, and thanked him, too."

"I cannot understand how you arranged matters so successfully."

"Aisy enough, me colleen. You see he was a counthryman of me own, and always had a civil word whiniver I was on deck. He didn't seem like the rist of 'em, but still he didn't give over till I showed him the diaments, thin he was as tinder-hearted as a child itself. He said he'd take it and help us, thin he'd go over to t'other side, fur he wa'n't sworn to the rebels, nohow—so, here we are," said Bridget.

The concluding, exceedingly practical clause, was suggested by the silence and extreme loneliness of the place.

"Yis, here we are, and what may be forninst us, the Lord only knows."

"Our condition can in no case be more terrible than the captivity from which we have escaped," said Ellinor.

"Yis, mum. The say is oncertain at best, especial' wid pirates, and if yer worst inemy catches ye, there's small place to run in, barrin' ye run intil the say itself. Here we've got the whole of North Ameriky afore us at l'aste, and, as if the moon knew jist what we want, there she is, this blissid minit. Now, let's see what kind of a counthry is this same, an' we'll make new diskiveries, as Robinson Crusoe did, when he diskivered Ameriky."

Bridget advanced a step, and suddenly exclaimed:

"Howly Moses! I'm a-goin' down!"

"Bridget, you terrify me," cried Ellinor.

"I tarrify meself, let alone other pable. I belave the whole place is mud, wid nothin' but wather on it, at all, at all."

Bridget's alarm was not without cause, for she had stepped into a mud-pit, from which she extricated herself with difficulty.

"An' we'll hev to sthand here in the mud itself till the murtherin' thaives come and find us, and carry us back ag'in on board the ould pirate crew itself."

"Do not suggest the thought," exclaimed Ellinor. "The moonlight is every moment becoming brighter. We can, we must, find means of escape."

A cheerless prospect was revealed in the silvery light. The beach on which they had landed was but a mere strip, was soon lost in a swamp, filled with dense undergrowth, so interwoven as to be impenetrable. The only mode of egress was by a narrow and almost imperceptible path, so overgrown as to be nearly impassable.

"Thin, this is our ounly course, and we must thry it," said Bridget.

"Yes, for we know not at what moment we may be pursued."

"There's no avil widout *some* good, and if we can't go fast, by the same token, they'll be coming slow after us," said Bridget.

After following this path for some distance, it grew wider, and, until the dawn of day, they hastened onward. High above them towered the swamp-trees, in the branches of which as if to welcome the advent of the sun, birds of gorgeous plumage sung their matin songs. There was a rank luxuriance of vegetation, and many things beautiful and pleasant, but there were no signs of human habitations.

"Where iver do the human pape live?" exclaimed Bridget, as she sought in vain for what she so anxiously desired, some token of civilized life. "Come, miss, here's a fallen tree; take a seat on it, for it's meself that's tired, and ye're waike, intirely."

"Dare we pause here? Are we safe, Bridget?" asked Ellinor, anxiously.

"From thim thaives, yis. Safe enuf to ate a matter of a cowl'd biscuit or so," was the reply.

"You were very thoughtful, Bridget, to provide for this emergency," said Ellinor.

"An' it's meself wishes I'd provided betther still, for it saimes that we'll spind a saison, if not longer, here," said Bridget, casting a rueful glance on their surroundings.

Bridget found a pool of clear water, and, by means of a cup, formed of leaves, fastened with thorns, she made this primitive addition to their morning repast.

"It's saisonin' makes good the mate, and, by the same token, it's hunger and thirst that gives taste to the bread and wather. But, howly saints! what's that?"

Ellinor drew Bridget from her seat, and there, almost beneath her feet, was coiled a huge serpent.

"A rattlesnake!" exclaimed Ellinor.

"'Tis a rattlesnake, shure, and I've niver a doubt at all that's the way the ould sarpint stole upon Ave in the Garthen of Aiden. He was stailing on us, and if he hadn't dropped his tail on the ground unawares, he'd hev devoured us, intirely. But I'll niver turn me back upon the likes of ye, will Biddy Flaherty. There! take that, will ye? If Mother Ave had sarved yer great-gran'father the same, what a power of sorrow would hev bin saved us human craythers."

Bridget had seized a ponderous stick, and dealt a succession of furious blows upon the head of the hideous reptile.

"Didn't he look surprised? Faith, I belave the crayther was as as much frightened as I was meself," said she, as she surveyed her writhing and vanquished foe with evident satisfaction.

CHAPTER V. THE WRECK.

THE human beings left by their captors to perish on the "Ellinor," were destined to be the means of bringing retribution upon the outlaws.

Will Brande did not long remain insensible. Aided by his companions, he examined Captain Vannier's wounds, and rendered such assistance as their limited means permitted. The storm lulled, and, although the wreck lay at the mercy

of the waves, they were not in momentary danger, for, by strenuous efforts they might, to use their own expression, "keep their heads above water," for some hours. They were hopeful; many things might occur in this time, for their relief, and they set to work "right cheerily."

"You see, comrades, it ain't a hopeless case, after all," said Will, "though chances be against us. It ain't often human beings is left to perish in the sea; leastways, that's my 'pinion. So we'll just keep good heart, as long as we're above the level. We must splice the masts somehow, and make a high point for signals. The carpenter can manage that, with help, I guess, and, in the mean time, the cook had better give us our grub, as usual, for *that* keeps good heart in a man, along with a little drop of something strong—mind, comrades, not too much. The day's breakin'; I'll see about the cap'n, then take the lookout, and, comrades, we'd better all trust in Providence. Leastways, that's my 'pinion."

The seamen applauded Will's sentiments, and readily consented to submit to his guidance. There was indeed scarcely an alternative. They soon raised signals of distress, but it required their united exertions to defer the dreaded moment, and the most sanguine felt that at best they could not long keep the wreck afloat; but Will Brande continued confident, and cheered all by his example. It was already past noon-day, when Will, who had scarcely left his post, came where the crew were busiest, and said:

"There's nothing like trusting in Providence, comrades. There's a sail in sight."

There followed numerous questions as to the nature of the "sail."

"Man-of-war, I should call her, boys, trim and taut," was the reply.

"But, were they discovered?"

"She's bearing for this point."

"Three cheers for the flag!"

They were given with a will; then, with that peculiar zest inspired by hope, the men resumed their labors.

Ere darkness fell again upon the face of the waters, the man-of-war lay alongside the wreck, and she was received with such intense, heartfelt joy, as those experience who greet their deliverers.

Will Brande's face brightened, and his voice expressed intense gratification as an officer, the first who set foot upon the wreck, approached, and he exclaimed:

"Captain Armstrong!"

"Will, where are they?" questioned the officer thus addressed. His voice trembled with intense emotion, as he grasped the honest sailor's hand.

"The cap'n is here, sir, badly wounded, but the young lady's gone," answered Will.

"Gone!" echoed the questioner.

In a few words, Will gave an account of the events of the previous night. Captain Armstrong listened in silence, then, in a voice of suppressed rage, he uttered an oath of vengeance.

"I'm with you there, cap'n, I and all hands," said Will Brande. "Your coming was a fortunate coincidence."

"No coincidence, Will. A few days after Captain Vannier left port, the Ocean Scourge

was reported, depredating at sea. I obtained leave to cruise for her and hastened on the track of vessels homeward bound, fearing that she might meet with the Ellinor. I am, alas, too late to save her from their hands, but not too late to avenge her fate."

Captain Vannier, in a state of partial delirium, owing to his wounds, which the seamen had not been able to care for properly, was conveyed on board the "Union Flag," and tended by careful hands, while, guided by instinct, as it were, or, like a wild beast scenting its prey, the avenger sped onward.

CHAPTER VI.

NEW FRIENDS.

Two weary nights of exposure and terror were passed by Ellinor Vannier and her devoted attendant, in wandering through the intricacies of what seemed an endless swamp. They were obliged to use the greatest care to avoid the numerous mud-pits, and a variety of terrible reptiles which they encountered was a constant and fruitful source of alarm. The path which they had been so fortunate as to discover at first, had long since disappeared, and the desolation was so perfect as to induce the belief that never before had these wilds been visited by a human being. They had no food remaining, and, as night approached, Ellinor declared her inability to proceed further. Bridget wrung her hands in despair.

"Ye'll never live the night ag'in in the open air, widout no house at all to put over yer head, and no supper to ate. Och hone! another night wid the snakes, and sarpints, and crockydals! Shure they'll ate us afore the mornin', and we'll niver be able to so much as lift up our eyes ag'in' the craythers, much they'll care if we did, bad luck to 'em."

Ellinor's heart was full. She could speak no words to allay the fears of her companion.

"We'd as well die sittin' down as standin' in this haythen land. Here's an ould tree, wid grane soft moss at the fut of it, makin' me think of a swate bog in old Ireland itself. Belike, ye can rest a bit here, though there's no knowin' if ther' an't a crockydale forninst the tree, bad luck to it. It's meself that always thought if ye kipt on a-goin' ye'd come to somewhere; but here we've bin goin' and goin' and come to jist nowhere at all," said Bridget, despairingly.

Ellinor sunk almost exhausted upon the mossy seat, while Bridget continued her dolorous lamentations. Her voice which had become a wail of despair, now changed into a sudden expression of delight.

"Howly Mary!" I've found it at last. Niver so small a one, but I've found it. Shure, an' if *that* leads nowhere, it's the first path that iver did, barrin' tae unlucky one we found afore, bad luck to it."

There was, in reality, a pathway, very narrow and scarcely perceptible; but human beings had trodden there, and it gave them hope.

Before Bridget had ceased speaking, she was putting aside the tangled growth which intercepted the opening.

"Faith, it looks like a human baing did that,

to hide the same path; but I'll follow it if it goes to a din of thaives. Jist sthay here a minit, darlin'."

Bridget returned in a few moments, breathless with haste and terror, exclaiming:

"All the howly saints and angels save us now! We've come to an end at last. Oh! if we'd ounly staid wid the murtherin' pirates, and bin ate by the say-sarpints! That iver we'd come to this! Oh, if we was ounly in the Red Say wid the cannybels!"

"Bridget, what have you discovered?" questioned Ellinor.

"Diskivered! It's meself that's diskivered the say-sarpint ashore, the quaine of the monkeys, or the divil himself, I don't know which," was her reply.

"Have you seen a human being?"

"A human baing! Don't I tell ye it's meself that's sain the *divil*, bad luck to him?"

Ellinor, finding it impossible to obtain a rational answer, arose, determined to ascertain the cause of her alarm.

"Och, murther! it's running into the very face av danger ye are. Sorry's the day, or the night, belike, whin we lift our pirate fri'nds!" exclaimed Bridget, as, in increased alarm, she followed Ellinor.

The path wound, for a short distance, through a growth of cane, then suddenly terminated at an opening a few yards square. In the center of this space was a slight elevation, not unlike the roof of a house in form, and from this spot there issued a thin, curling wreath of smoke. Ellinor discerned a crevice where a small piece of turf was loosened. She stooped and looked through the aperture.

Here was an explanation of Bridget's terror. Crouching over the brilliant blaze of a pine-torch, was the form of an aged negro. His spare frame was bent nearly double, his head was white as the snowy cotton in the fields, while his hands and feet, extended as they were over the blaze, seemed not unlik the talons of a bird of prey. The flickering glare of the torch reproduced his shadow in a thousand grim, fantastic forms, which danced madly in the corners, and in the dingy sides of the cavern. It was altogether a sight, at such a time and place, well calculated to strike fear to a heart less susceptible to that emotion than that of the simple Bridget.

"I towld ye, miss, I'd found the divil, and in his hole in the ground, makin' brimstone pills for sinners. Shure, an' hasn't he a spear itself in his hand? If he'd turn around, I've niver a doubt we'd see his tayle. Oh, murther!"

The last exclamation was caused by a movement on the part of the object of contemplation. The torch was instantly extinguished, and they were in total darkness.

"An' now, all he'll hev to do will be jist to ate us itself," said Bridget, in terror.

"It's a negro," said Ellinor. "He has heard our voices and extinguished the torch."

"A nagur!" exclaimed Bridget. "Shure, an' it's meself that's niver sain a nagur afore wid claws, and cookin' brimsthone for his supper. He's comin' now. Och, I'm kilt intirely."

The negro's white hair and distended eyes were seen in the darkness as he peered forth

from the opening and exclaimed, in the accent peculiar to his race:

"Who's dar?"

Ellinor could not speak. Bridget uttered a groan.

"Who's dat?" asked the negro. "Ef ye don't do suffin' more'n groan, I'll let old Danger out on ye," he continued.

Ellinor now found words:

"We are wanderers, and ask protection in the name of humanity."

"Yis, in the name of hoomanity, and ivery other sort. Plaze, good misther divil or nagur, whichever ye be, an' it's all the same, I take it, don't turn the bloody imps on us," entreated Bridget.

The negro withdrew, but almost instantly reappeared with a light. He stopped aghast, as he surveyed the fugitives, and said slowly and incredulously:

"Two missuses! How did you get through de swamp?"

"We didn't, at all, at all; we're in it yit. We've comethrough pirates and crokydales and all kinds of insects, and, by the same token, we're stharvin' and fraizin' we are, wid the dewes that's like rain," said Bridget, whose power of speech gained strength in proportion to the decrease of her terror.

"Bress you, miss; if you can git down in old Mose's den, an' won't take 'fense at my askin'—"

"Indade we'd come—but we're kilt wid bein' scaired to death itself—if ye won't let out no imps nor ate us alive."

"Laws, missus! never hurt nobody in all de days of my life. Canbrake Mose wouldn't hurt a h'ar of yer head, and if you and t'other missus 'll come down, I'll give ye a bit of bread and meat," he said.

"Bread and m'ate!" ejaculated Bridget in an undertone, as she prepared to follow the old negro, who now descended into the den. "I'd as soon expect to pick apples off av the big trees in the great S'ary Desert itself."

Canbrake Mose descended the ladder that led to his abode, and Ellinor and Bridget followed. It was a dark and narrow place, but the pine-torch spread a cheerful glow which was very acceptable to our weary fugitives. Mose drew a seat for Ellinor near the fire, her weary and exhausted expression seeming to excite his pity.

"Here's a seat, missus. It's a sorry one, but better'n the damp ground. Bress your heart, you is tired, chile. Dis ain't no fit place for you, much lesser the cold ground," said Mose, as he looked in surprise at the delicate form and fair face before him. "You jes' sit down, and while you and t'other missus warms and dries I'll get a bite of supper."

And with an alacrity not to be expected from one of his apparent years, the negro hastened to prepare a meal for his unexpected guests.

From a niche in the wall he produced a tray, and in this with as much care as Bridget herself could have exercised, he proceeded to prepare bread. It was of Indian meal, white as wheaten flour; but, to Bridget's astonishment, this bread, when she thought it ready for the oven, he deposited in a bed of ashes upon the hearth and raked the glowing coals upon it.

"Alack the day that iver we'd come to this,

and be glad to ate bread made by a black nagur itself, and cooked in the ashes, at that," she murmured.

Mose next placed a nicely-dressed fowl upon the embers, and soon beside it there bubbled a diggy coffee-pot, which, however, emitted a peculiarly grateful odor.

There was no table, and but one plate; this was of tin, but clean and bright. Mose procured two forked poles, which he drove into the ground, and placed across them a piece of board. This served for a table.

"You see, missus," said the host, in an apologetic tone, "Mose ain't used to entertainin' company here, and what's good enough for him won't do for white ladies, by no manner of means, nobow, and, ef ye'll jes' excuse what's amiss, I'll do better to-morrow. Bress you! Mose knows *how* things orter be fix; jes' orter seen him in ole marse's time. Humph!" and Mose cast a glance of sovereign contempt on his humble surroundings. He had evidently inherited that characteristic weakness of the simple-minded African, pride in the lost wealth or departed glory of "de family."

Ellinor assured him that no words of apology were needed, and Bridget exclaimed:

"We're glad ov the m'ate and bread itself, let alone the plates and knives; besides, beggars mustn't be choosers, at all, at all."

The fowl had reached the last stages, and Mose, after sundry examinations, took the bread, steaming, from the embers, and plunged it into a vessel of cold water, whence he took it, still steaming, and placed it upon the improvised table. To Bridget's surprise, the crust was alternately white and brown, while the inside was white as before it was consigned to its ashy bed, and the odor was inviting. The bread was placed with broiled fowl upon a small wooden tray, and the only plate placed for Ellinor. The coffee-pot, innocent of handle or spout, completed the array. Notwithstanding these deficiencies, the coffee was adroitly poured out by Mose into two vessels; one a tin cup, which he had assiduously scoured while the meal was in progress—this he placed for Ellinor. The other, a small cracked pitcher of earthenware, like its ancient companion, the coffee-pot, shorn of useful and ornamental appendages, served Bridget for a cup. Bridget placed the choicest portions of the fowl on Ellinor's plate, with the seeming intention of attending as was her custom.

"Do you suppose, Bridget, I will allow you to wait until I have supped?" asked Ellinor.

"It's meself that never presumes upon me position; but the sarcumstances is an inducement, and I'll do as ye wish, miss," replied Bridget.

Mose set upon the table a huge gourd-shell filled with cool water, then stood by with an air of evident satisfaction, while his guests partook of their impromptu meal.

Bridget forgot that the bread was baked in the ashes, also that their cook was of ebony hue, and, as she arose from the table, expressed her thorough appreciation of the efforts of their humble host to promote their comfort.

"It's good enough for a quaine altogether, so it is, Misther Nagur, though ye'r desarvin' a better name itself," she said,

"Mose, missus—Canebrake Mose, at your service."

"I'll jist dhrop the Canebrakin' part, for it's a haythenish name altogether, and I'd be afther breakin' my tongue itself wid sp'akin' ov it."

Bridget being refreshed by her supper, began to surmise concerning the arrangements their new friend would make for their night's repose.

"Though if he's as good at *that* as he is at gettin a supper wid nothing visible at all at all to git it wid, it's meself need feel no consarn," she soliloquized; and it was probably her thoughts on this subject which caused her to look more closely than she had before done into the recesses of the "den." As she cast her eyes toward the corner most remote from her seat, they rested upon an object which gave new cause for terror. Two glaring eyes, like balls of fire, were fixed upon her face, and, beneath, she distinctly saw the jaws of an animal, red, as if bathed in blood. Ellinor whose eyes followed the direction of Bridget's affrighted gaze, could scarce repress a shudder.

"Hiven save us now!" ejaculated Bridget. "There's the bloody Danger ye spoke of, itself. He's ready now to ate us, and all the blessin's and supper we've had is lost."

"That's Danger, missis, but he's the innocentest thing in life when he gits acquainted," said Mose.

"Hiven save me from sich acquaintances," exclaimed Bridget, unable to draw her eyes from the object of her terror, and "Danger" returned her steady gaze.

"He don't forget anybody that's kind to him, and if he takes bread once from your hand, he'll never forget it, missis," said Mose.

"Nayther I think would I, meself," said Bridget, in terror at the thought.

"T'other missis ain't feard," said Mose as he took a piece of bread, and handed it to Ellinor. "It's berry well to make fr'en's with Danger, missus. He knows his fr'en's."

Mose approached the dog and, by way of introduction, he patted the massive head, then placed his hand on Ellinor's dress. The eyes of the ferocious animal assumed a mild look; then Ellinor extended her hand containing the bread. Danger opened his huge jaws, and accepted the morsel with evident pleasure.

Ellinor then placed her hand upon his head, when he evinced his delight by gambols which, in an animal of his size and ferocious appearance, seemed ludicrous.

"I'd as soon ixpect an illephant to roll tinnies, or a roarin' lion to play bo-pape, as that same wolf-bound to play wid my leddy's hand, like a poodle, or a little King Charles in the drawing-room," exclaimed Bridget, alarmed at her mistress's temerity.

"You see, missis, he's used to white folks, 'specially missus's chillun. Der' ain't many dogs like Danger," said Mose, as he surveyed his pet with evident pride.

"Troth an' it's meself that hopes they won't be plentiful till the time comes when the Holy Book spakes ov, when the lion and the lamb will lie down together, and the cow and calf, though it's meself don't see how that last is so surprisin' but natural altogether," said Bridget.

Mose left the "den," as he appropriately de-

nominated his place of abode, and soon returned, bearing on his shoulders a load of tender boughs of the pliant swamp elm. Of these he constructed a simple couch.

"Sure and he don't ixpect we'll slape on trees, like monkeys, or haythen itself," ejaculated Bridget, in dismay. But when his preparations were completed, and upon the soft-leaved twigs a thick covering was laid, Bridget hesitated not to repose her weary limbs upon her allotted resting-place.

CHAPTER VII.

NEW ALARMS.

BRIDGET'S awakening exclamation on the following morning was characteristic.

"Shure an' it's meself that's slept a Christian slape intirely, on a haythen bed; thanks be to good Misther Mowse for that same, and to the kind saints that sent him. There he is now, gittin' breakfast, and it's the l'aste one can do, to offer to lind a helpin' hand, though it's meself couldn't bake bread in the ashes, and pick it out whole, like a nut out'n the shell, not for the life of me."

Bridget, however, fulfilled her original intention of proffering assistance, although greatly doubting her capacity. To her offer Mose replied.

"Bress you, missis, you don't s'pose I's gwine to let a white lady help me jis' git a bite of breakfas'. Mose been raiso better'n dat, missis."

"Barrin' the *white*, ye'r' callin' me out ov me name altogether. I'm the young leddy's *sarvint*, and no *leddy* meself at all, at all," answered Bridget, in a tone as though indignant at the implied assertion.

"You's *white*, anyhow, missus," persisted Mose.

"It's no *misthress* I am, nayther. I niver called a dog nor a cat even me own in all me life. It's the *misthress* yonder, it is, slaping swately, as a b'aste of burden itself. I'm plain Biddy Flaherty," said the matter-of-fact Bridget.

"Den you ain't no kin to little missus there, is you, Miss Biddy?" asked Mose.

"Is it bloody kindred ye m'ane? Not a bit," replied Bridget.

In low tones, lest she should awaken Ellinor, Bridget proceeded, in her own peculiarly graphic style of narrative, to recount their adventures. Mose often paused, his eyes and mouth distended with astonishment, and at the conclusion he exclaimed:

"Gor' mighty, missus! It's a wonder you live frough it, 'specially little missus."

Breakfast was a repetition of the supper of the previous night, and, at its conclusion, Mose said:

"Spec' you'd better feed Danger, little missus. I'm gwine to lef you wid him."

"Shure, Misther Mowse, ye're not gwine to l'ave us all alone by ourselves in this haythenish place?" exclaimed Bridget, filled anew with apprehension.

"Nothin' ain't gwine to hurt you, Miss Biddy. It won't *find* you first, I 'spec'. You's de first

I's knowed of comin' here, for ever so many years, done forgot how many, 'bout a hundred, I reckon," said Mose, as he proceeded to loosen Danger's chain, which was secured by a stake, driven into the ground.

"Dar! I *know* nobody won't come now; if dey does, most likely dey won't get away fast, hel hel!" chuckled Mose, with an admiring glance at the huge animal as he paced about the narrow room.

"I'm thinkin' that same, an' it's a blissed mercy itself, it is, and not owin' to himself, nor his own appetite, if he don't ate us," exclaimed Bridget, as she eyed Danger with a feeling not in the least allied to admiration.

"I'll be back, missus, as soon as I can, but it won't be long 'fore night. Dese yere things ain't good enuf for you, and I's gwine to get some better ones. Here, Danger, stay! stay and watch, sir," said Mose.

Danger had arisen, as though for the purpose of following his sable keeper, but, at these words, seeming to comprehend their import, he crouched at Ellinor's feet, and uttered a low growl.

Mose took from the recess in the wall a variety of toys, birds and beasts, carved in wood, tiny boxes and baskets, curiously formed of grass and fine fibers of the young cane. These he carefully deposited in a sachel he carried.

"If iver!" exclaimed Bridget; "wid all the rest, he's got a toy shop in that hole in the wall."

"Dem's for de chilluns. I never goes home 'dout carryin' of 'em somethin'," said Mose. "And now, Miss Biddy, you'd better shut de door crack after me."

Bridget ascended the steps leading to the opening, and gazed after "Canebrake Mose" as he disappeared, then, with a sigh of regret, she descended.

"He's gone, shure, and we're left lonesome and alone, jist like the poet that never had a flower nor nothin' but it died. So here's the day afore us, wid nothin' at all, save this b'aste of a cur starin' us in the face like an imp from t'other place, as he is."

"Do not murmur at our present condition, Bridget. It is merciful compared with the suffering and terror of the past few days. It is meet that we should be thankful for our deliverance," said Ellinor.

"Shure, an' I'm thankful for that same, miss," replied Bridget, earnestly, "but if we're *escaped* or not, it's meself don't know, though it ain't likely the aivil one himself would find us in *this* houle in the ground, an' if he *did* this b'aste would ate him and his whole family, if they came one at the time, I'm thinkin'."

Here Danger, as if in answer to this personal allusion, uttered a sonorous growl.

"There! it's meself knows that crayther's more human than b'aste, and more divil than aither," exclaimed Bridget, inspired with fear at every movement of their sagacious companion.

A few hours passed quietly, and Bridget, who had recovered somewhat from depression of spirits caused by the departure of Canebrake Mose, observing Ellinor's despondency, descanted largely on their blessings.

"It ain't one in a hundred, miss, ship'racked wid pirets as we was, injoys *our* pleasures," she exclaimed, with a gesture of supreme content.

Ellinor could scarce suppress a smile, as she mentally contrasted her companion's late repining with her present view of their condition.

"Let alone the 'atin' and slapin', and havin' a house—such as it is—there's the rest a body can take. Why, miss, that's a fortune in itself, it is. It's better nor a legacy. Here we've bin two whole hours, and not a sound, barrin' our sp'akin', itself, and—"

Her words were interrupted most unexpectedly. Danger, still lying at Ellinor's feet, uttered low growls, and Bridget assumed a listening attitude.

"Perhaps his keen sense of hearing enables him to distinguish some distant sound. There may be danger threatening," said Ellinor.

"Hivin' forbid! It's that same fearin' and bearin', that's tuk the life out'n me, intirely. If ther' *was* a daife saint, I'd patronize him. I would, ixcept he wouldn't beare me prayers at all," ejaculated Bridget.

"Whatever's comin', man or b'aste, I'll take a pape at him," said Bridget, as she mounted the ladder and looked cautiously through the crevice. "It's comin', miss. Oh, hivens and 'arth! Saints and divils save us, it's *come*!" and Bridget, in her haste to descend, precipitated herself to the ground.

"I hear nothing, Bridget," said Ellinor.

"Ye heare *nothing*, do ye? Jist wait, will ye; it's a crawlin' divil!"

And, in a moment, a shuffling sound was distinctly heard, as though some animal were making the circuit of the cabin-roof, which was nearly level with the ground.

"Och hone! it's the ould imp, I know it is. Who iver could hev told him we was herried alive, and not dead, in this baiste ov a den?" exclaimed Bridget, who now was reduced to the extremity of despair.

"It may be a harmless animal, Bridget," suggested Ellinor, whose alarm was not so forcibly demonstrated.

"As if ther' iver *was* a harmless b'aste!" exclaimed Bridget, incredulously.

The cause of their alarm was, however, about to demonstrate its character.

After making the circuit of the roof several times, the noise suddenly ceased, then was heard again distinctly at the opening.

"Oh, hoo! it's comin' in, is the crayther, and t'his is a worse place nor the baistely say itself to run away in," cried Bridget.

The stones and loose turf were pushed from the opening, and, in their place was inserted the head of an alligator!

Ellinor could not repress a shriek, and Bridget exhausted the saintly calendar in ejaculations, alternately angry and prayerful, while the intruder calmly surveyed the scene.

"Och hone! bad luck to yez, ther' ye stand lookin' on us, like an aigle at a poor lamb, thinkin' ye'll ate us; ther'll be no blessin' on yer faist, that's a consolation, at laist," cried Bridget.

Danger stood irresolute between the parties, as if waiting for orders. Suddenly, Ellinor remembered the words which Mose had used in

leaving the animal in charge of the cabin and its inmates, and resolved to try their effect.

"Watch, Danger, watch," she said.

These words acted with magical effect. Danger did not wait for their conclusion, but with incredible rapidity darted toward the animal, which snapped its enormous jaws with terrible force at its attacking foe. Danger seized his antagonist, together they rolled down the ladder and renewed the struggle at the feet of the terrified spectators.

Bridget seized Ellinor in her strong arms, and ran up the ladder, exclaiming:

"Och, howly Mary! we must go and laive them the din itself, we must."

But, with a sudden impulse that had nearly pre-empted both Ellinor and herself among the combatants below, she drew backward and commenced hastily to close the aperture, as she renewed her exclamations, if possible with an additional expression of terror.

"Oh, howly Vargin! and all the good and blissid in airth and hiven! whativer *will* we do now itself? It's surrounded, we are, cut off intirely, in the bloom of youth, wid no one to mourn us at all, for no human crayther'll know what ate us, bad luck to it. Don't ye hear 'em, more insicts like that orayther there, a-walkin' an' scratchin'?"

It was true. The same shuffling noise which had preceded the appearance of the first intruder was now repeated, as the new-comers made the circuit of the ground roof. Ellinor was unnerved by this accumulation of terrors, and trembled with apprehension. Bridget made the entrance as secure as possible, her terror increasing whenever one of their unwelcome visitors drew near.

"Perhaps, Bridget, they will pass the door unobserved," said Ellinor, with a sigh of relief, as the point of entrance seemed unholed.

"Perhaps they *won't* and perhaps they *will*," said Bridget, sententiously.

How fared the combatants below? The contest raged furiously, but with what success the anxious and affrighted spectators could not decide.

"Howly Moses! ain't it a blissid thing the crayther's legs are so short he can't walk upstairs, itself?" said Bridget, as the alligator, seeking to escape his fierce antagonist, crawled along the sides of the cabin and paused at the steps.

The strife finally became unequal. The dog, seeming to comprehend the nature of his antagonist, attacked him only at vulnerable points, and contrived, successfully, to escape the furious gnashing of his enemy's jaws. At last, the alligator, blinded and infuriate, snapped madly in the air, and the dog seemed to feel that now the monster was at his mercy. He coolly ensconced himself beneath the steps, as if to collect himself for a grand effort, while he watched the futile and exhausting rage of his weakened adversary.

After a short time thus passed, Danger arose and rushed furiously upon his foe. Soon the monster yielded to his fate, the bloodhound buried his fangs in the region of his heart, the only point where he might successfully attack the life of the terrible creature.

It was long, however, before they ventured

from their position, and Bridget protested vehemently against the step.

"It would be a tempting of Providence, that same, for there is no tellin' whin the horrid insict may wake up and sp'ake to us, itself," she said, as she eyed their fallen foe, suspiciously.

Danger, as if conscious of his achieved victory and to give assurance of his continued watchfulness, stretched himself beside his late antagonist. The noise without had ceased, and at length, assured that the life of the alligator was extinct. Ellinor and her companion descended to the ground.

"If that dog ain't *more* than human, it's meself that's *less*, and I'll niver slandher a dog ag'in, if he's in human shapo or ony other, won't I," exclaimed Bridget, as she ventured to put her hand on Danger's head.

"An' now, if I ken onuly git 'round that horrid crayther, an' git ye a cup of coffee itself—barrin' ther' ain't no cup, nor nothin' to make it in, an' the dogs an' crockydals hev put out the fire wid the'r tayles, an' sich a thing as a match was niver known in this haythen land," said Bridget. "Shure, miss, yez won't be afther waypin *now*, whin we've ivery thing for our comfort, and *more besides*; and here's some cowl in the corner. If I kin only find the d'are, swate little taypot, widout a tayle, I'll soon give ye a nice cup of coffee, barrin' the cr'ame itself."

Ellinor could not, however, imbibe her companion's cheerful views, and Bridget continued:

"Jist whin it's meself *knows* good-luck's in sthore for us! See, the sun's gittin' low, and Misther Canebrake Mowse will come and bring nobody knows what, itself. Thin we'll git away, for, though we ain't saine no human, barrin' Mister Mowse, and I misgive that *he's* oulder than the flood itself, ther' is humans, and I make no doubt we'll live happy as quaines whin we do find pable."

Bridget soon prepared coffee, and prevailed on Ellinor to partake of it.

"It's meself that's goin' to pape out, now, and see if thin craythers is got tired of waitin' round the corner for the'r fri'nd yonder."

She again ascended the ladder, and looked forth.

"They're gone, ivery one of 'em, Hiven bless 'em! And as I'm a livin', dyin' sinner, yonder's Misther Mowse, loaded all over wid somethin'! You see, miss, that's what's come of faith. Shure I'd think he was armed to fight some cookin' divil itself, I would."

Mose soon made his appearance at the entrance, which we will denominate, *par excellence*, the "door." He bore a load, to the weight of which he attested with a sigh of relief as he deposited his burden upon the ground. Across his shoulders was strapped a hamper, well filled; around his neck and waist were suspended various cooking implements, which caused him to present a most grotesque appearance.

"S'pose nothin' ain't 'sturb you, has ther', missus?" he questioned.

"It's aiten we've bin, the blissed day, itself," exclaimed Bridget, "an' it's kilt intirely dead we'd hev bin, if Danger there hadn't aite the crayther up first."

Canebrake Mose regarded the result of the conflict in astonishment, and exclaimed:

"I clean forgot to feed 'em before I went away dis mornin'."

"Fade 'em!" ejaculated Bridget. "Is *thim* yer pets?"

"Not 'zactly, missus, but I's bin feedin' 'em. A showman said he'd give me twenty dollars for 'em, so I begun wid 'em when they was babies—"

"Babies! As if *thim* craythers was iver babies!" exclaimed Bridget, contemptuously.

"They never come here afore; I fed 'em in de swamp; but dey didn't git bre'kfas' dis mornin', and come to look for it—he! he! Wonder dey didn't bite you, missus."

"Bite! Faith, I'm thinkin' it would be 'atein', itself. I wa'n't raised in a country wher' they kape pet crockydales and alligators, for in my 'pinion, one's t'other, and t'other's one, itself," said Bridget, indignantly.

"He ain't more'n half grown, missus, nohow," said Mose, as he prepared to remove the body. "Ef he had been, no dog in *dis* world couldn't hev kilt him."

"It makes the blood of me run cowld, intirely, it does, the sight ov him."

It was a laborious task to remove the remains, but it was at last accomplished, and now Bridget's curiosity was fully awakened as to the contents of the hamper which Mose proceeded, with an air of gratification, to unpack.

"How did ye find yer children, Mister Mowse?" questioned Bridget.

"My chillun, missus!" he repeated.

"Yis, shure, *thim* ye carried the birds and little b'astes and wee baskets to," she replied.

"Bress you, missus! dem ain't *my* chillun; dey 'longs to mist'—*my* missus, I mean. Mose ain't got no chillun nowheres 'bout here, 'cept missus's. Mine's all growed up. Some's in Kaintuck wid Marse Phil, and some's in Misseppy 'long wid Miss Alice. I staid 'long o' missus. One de boys 'long wid young marse in de war. Dem things you see, for missus's chillun; dey allus looks for suffin' when I goes home."

"Honey! Ef ye got a *home* what makes ye stay in this din ov a place?"

"I likes it, missus. Ole marse, dat's mist' gran'father, raise me in de home house, and I was mist' head man, clean till she got married, den some dem lazy, med'lin' niggers sot *him*, 'gainst me, and I wa'n't gwine to stan' dat nohow, so I run'd away, and staid in dis yer' place fifteen years. Den marse died, and I went back to mist'; *she* knowed whar Mose was all de time, and dey never *did* hunt dis swamp—he! he!"

"Why didn't ye go and live wid yer children?" questioned Bridget.

"Marse Phil want to buy me out'n de estate, but I ruther 'long to mist'; 'ca'se, you see, I done raise her myself—carried her, and her ma afore her, in dese arms many a day. Ah! dem *was* grand times; de fine ladies and gentlemans comes in de'r fine carri'ges and horses, and den I bring little mist' out, de prettiest thing dar, on dat land. Mose wa'n't so old den," and the speaker sighed.

"But what iver makes you sthay here *now*?" persisted his questioner.

"Mist' ain't got nobody to look after things for her, and marse, dat's her husban' dat's

dead, spent a heap of her property, and sold her niggers. It like mighty nigh to broke her heart; but he took and died, *jes* in time. Dat's de most sensible thing I ever knew marse to do—he! he! So I stays down here part of de time to look out," said Mose.

"For what? Crockydales?" asked Bridget.

"De blockaders and sojers; folks 'fraid dey'll come, and if dey does, mist' gwine to send all her cattle and hosses out'n de way. If dey come, I il see 'em first thing, and run up to de home house, whar mist' lives," answered their host.

During this conversation Mose had relieved the hamper of its contents. There were many delicacies and necessities; ham, mutton, dressed fowls, snowy bread, rich cakes, butter, tea, coffee, and sugar.

"Dar!" exclaimed Mose, in tones of satisfaction, "mist' sent you dese, wid her bes' compliments, and she sent you a letter, too, little missus."

Mose handed Ellinor a note, penned in a delicate female hand. The writer expressed the deepest commiseration for the misfortunes of the strangers, and assured them that no efforts should be spared to relieve their deplorable condition.

This sympathy, so welcome yet so unexpected, touched Ellinor to the heart, and she wept like a child.

"It's meself never could understhand some pable. They cry when ther's no cause for graife, and when ther's cause for waipin', they're as bold as a lion," said Bridget, her eyes moist with sympathetic tears.

"Mist' sent dis yer' to you, most special, little missus, kase I telled her you's poorly like. It's ole wine, and 'll do you a heap of good," said Mose, placing the article referred to in Bridget's hand.

"I cannot express my appreciation of such great and unlooked-for kindness," said Ellinor.

"Bress you, chile, *my* mist's de bes' lady in de world, she is. Ef she could only git you all up to de home house, she'd nuss an' care fer you *jes* like you was her own flesh an' blood, an' as fer ole Mose, I's b'en used to waitin' on white chillun all my life. Done raise as many of 'em as any nigger in dis State."

"An' is it a sthate itself this dirthy swamp is in, wid its crockydales, shure?" exclaimed Bridget.

"Dis yere's in Souf Caroliner, an' dis yer's Flat Swamp, missus."

As Mose spoke, he produced a damask tablecloth, with napkins, knives and forks, and other articles, which, with an air of pride he arranged upon the table, then proceeded with preparations for the evening meal, continuing, meanwhile, to enlighten his guests.

"You know, missus, dat if it wa'n't for dis yer' swamp all 'round, mist' would sent for you all directly, an' she's mighty 'stress 'bout it. Der's too much swamp for carriage and wagons, an' 'tain't water enuf for boats—a real, ole-time swamp. Bress you! ef ditches could helped it, marse would hev done it—he was keen, *he was*. So all de place 'tween de lan' and dis yer, ain't neither one thing nor t'other, half lan' and half water, an' t'other half mud," said Mose.

"How iver do you git over it, yerself, an' how did ye git all *this* over?" asked Bridget.

"I c'rawls and wades, and where it's too deep I gits over on some trees that fell down, and some I cuts down," replied Mose.

"Thin we're niver to git out ov this b'aste ov a place. Och hone, the day!" exclaimed Bridget.

"Yes, you will, missus," replied Mose, confidently, as he complacently viewed the table and its accessories.

"How iver, thin? We can nayther swim nor fly, and I'll niver see the face of swate Ireland again itself," sighed Bridget.

"Don't you b'lieve dat, missus. I lef' Tom, and Bill, and Bob a-cuttin' poles like all do world. Trus' my missus for *dat*."

"And is it poles we'll go over on, shure?" asked Bridget.

"Dey're gwine to fix a sort of floatin' bridge of poles to lie on top so you and little missus can walk over."

Ellinor listened to the proposed plan for their relief, scarcely surprised at the intelligence. They had received so much unexpected kindness, that she seemed to accept this as a natural consequence.

"Hiven be praised! We're like to git out ov this, at last, and it's Biddy Flaberty that'll niver more trust the say, wid the pirates and roarin' crockydales. An' who iver dhramed of drinkin' coffee itself from chaney cups, in a place like this, not to mention the crame, which reminds me of ould Ireland, intirely, so it does; and the chaney cups don't at all, at all," exclaimed Bridget, as, seated at the sumptuously spread table, she filled a cup for Ellinor.

She could not recover from her surprise at their ameliorated condition, and never wearied in making comments thereon, while the same subject seemed to be a cause of equal gratification to their simple-hearted entertainer. Mose stood by, and attended their wants with alacrity, doubtless conjecturing many a vision of the past grandeur of "other days."

"And if the 'ating last night was fit for a quaine, this same supper is fit for the President of Chaney, it is," was Bridget's assertion, at its conclusion.

CHAPTER VIII.

REPOSE.

On the following morning, Mose, after preparing breakfast, made every possible arrangement for the comfort of his guests, preparatory to taking his departure for the day.

"'Case you see, missus," said he, addressing Ellinor, "Dem boys dunno *much*, an' dey jes' as like to put de logs in the wrongest place dey can find, and if we 'pends on *dem*, it won't be done for a whole month."

"Thin, for the love of hiven itself, Mистер Mowse, but yer haythenish pets into a pen, afore ye l'ave us," exclaimed Bridget.

"'Tain't worth while to be 'feard of dem little alligators, missus; don't 'spec' dey's goin' to hurt you, nohow, but I'll give dem a good feed, den dey'll stay in place," said Mose.

"If it don't rain crockydales and 'archquakes

on our heads, we may live the day," said Bridget, when Mose took his departure.

The day passed quietly. Bridget, profiting by the previous day's experience, did not venture to remove the stones and earth, which Mose had arranged with care. There was not so much as the rustling of a leaf to alarm them. Danger, feeling himself constituted their guardian, often arose, and, as though remembering the ladder as the point of the enemy's appearance on the day previous, proceeded thither, uttering low growls; then, resuming his place at Ellinor's feet, he caressed her hands, and looked into her face, as though to assure her of the absence of all cause of alarm, and of his power to protect her in any emergency.

The noble brute appeared to have conceived a strong affection for the gentle girl, and Ellinor felt, in this singular solitude, that she had an efficient protector, while Bridget, although she still approached him with fear and trembling, often reiterated the opinion—

"That dog is more human than half the papple in the world, anyhow."

Ellinor no longer felt despondent and apprehensive for the future. The length of time which had elapsed since their escape removed, in a measure, the fear of pursuit, and she knew that efforts were being made for their deliverance—exertions which there was every reason to suppose would prove successful. There was but one source of grief. Kind friends might rescue her and minister to her wants, she might even again be restored to him she loved, all earthly blessings might again be hers—save one. Nor love, nor wealth, nor the grateful sympathy of friends could restore her to her father's arms.

"Now whisht, honey, what's the use ov wap-in'? Ye'r' betther off now than half the folks in the world, fur more'n half on 'em's seen the'r ounly fathers dead and burried, afore the'r eyes; it's meself has seen that same, barrin' me daddy fell intil the say, as I tould yez afore, and I didn't persaive him at all, at all. Ye ain't seen naythur the one nor the other, an' ye don't know yerself but the cap'n is as well an' 'live as yerself, jist."

This was simply an effort at consolation, Bridget little dreaming how nearly her surmises approximated to the truth. Her patience through this long day was wonderful. It was not until the approach of night that she evinced any of those changes to which her mercurial nature was subject.

"It's come to an end at last, so it has. Long as it samed, the day has an end, as all things good and avil—'specially *avil*, must," she exclaimed, as the slanting rays which penetrated through the crevices of the door into the cabin, grew fainter.

"Bridget, don't forget your teachings; you have read me a lesson to-day, you know, on hope and faith," said Ellinor.

"R'ading *you* a lissan! Sorry a bit hev I done that same," exclaimed Bridget. "Wasn't yez always the image of faith and patience itself, I'd like to know, to say nothin' of all the other cardinal points of the compass? But, if Saint Pathrick himself was here shut up wid that craythur, and instead of the blissid light of the sun which is me meat and me bread itself, in-

stead of the blessid sun I say, that b'aste of a haythenish torch in the chamney, he'd lose heart, though he *had* the patience of Jowb, he would."

Ellinor smiled at the assumption of a new virtue as characteristic of Bridget's favorite saint.

"It's smilin' ye are; ye may think that all the patience was given to Jowb, because he was an oulder man—though I niver heard of his being a saint, itself, and niver a bit left at all, at all for Saint Pathrick. They left a bit of *all* the vartues for the blissid saint of ould Ireland, and it didn't sp'ile wid the *kapin'*, though he's the last saint to get credit for all the good he did in this poor, thankless world. But, if ye can smile in this den, kape on, aven if it's larfin' at Saint Pathrick himself ye are, rest his sowl. It does me heart good to see ye smile at anything, it does. But hist, I hear somethin', an' shure it must be Misther Mowse."

Bridget ascended the steps, and as she peeped through the crevices, continued:

"Yes, it's himself, though I niver thought I'd see the day whin I'd look on the likes of him as me guardian angel; an' he's bringin' a long sthring of little fish, shinin' like silver. Hiven bless him for the same."

Mose brought a string of glistening silver perch, which he displayed to Ellinor, saying:

"Ain't dese pretty, missus? Mist' sent 'em down to de swamp by one of de boys for yer supper. Dey done cotch 'em in de lake las' night."

"They are beautiful and sufficiently tempting for an epicurian appetite, and I prize them as an additional token of that kindness which has already loaded us with favors," said Ellinor.

"Bress you, chile, what's folks put inter dis yer' world for, if it ain't to take care of each other? Dese yer' fishes is pretty, and dey's good; of dat trufe you shall soon 'vince yourself," said Mose, as he commenced preparations for supper, actively, as though this were the beginning instead of the conclusion of his daily duty.

He told, with pleasure, of the progress of the labors in the swamp, and assured them that they might soon expect to leave their present abode.

After supper had been prepared and partaken of, Mose, seeing with pleasure that his addition to the bill of fare was appreciated, Danger was duly fed and caressed, and Ellinor and her attendant retired, thankful for the first day of rest since their escape from the pirate ship. Mose took the seat by the fire, which, since the advent of his guests, had been his only place of repose.

"An' it will be a blessin', shure, once more to set fut in a Christian land, if 'twas only among Hindoos and Hottentots. But it's meself that's thinkin', Misther Mowse, ye've hard slapin' sittin' up all night an' watchin' instead of layin' down like a tired Christian," said Bridget.

"Bress you, missus, it's all in use—I's use to dat. L'arnt to sleep so when I was in de wars wid marse—dat's ole marse's father. Mose was a boy then."

"Hiven defend us," soliloquized Bridget; "as if *he* iver was a boy; it's my belaiif he's forgot whin he was born, and been livin' forever. I've

no doubt he's been in all the wars, Christian and haythen. Belike he was at the Howly Land itself."

Bridget fell asleep, to dream of Canebrake Mose, mounted on a fiery charger, and clad in the armor of a crusader; but, although he was a boy in stature, his face was, even then, furrowed with traces of many years.

CHAPTER IX.

A NIGHT OF TERROR.

ANOTHER day passed as tranquilly as the one described. Mose was absent all day. On his return he exhibited more than usual elation.

"You see, missus, we was gittin' sort of down-hearted. De logs didn't work good nobow; de mud kept sinkin' an' givin' way when we didn't expect it. Working there wa'n't no more'n throwin' straws ag'in' the wind. I jes' went up to de home house, and tole mist' 'bout it, so she went over to Marse Robert's, dat's her cousin dat's in de army, a-layin' of bridges, dey calls him a engineer, dough I don't know what for, 'ca'se he don't run no injines, but dey calls him so, howsomever, and he come prancin' down on de gray hoss, like mad. You see he was in a mighty hurry 'ca'se der's a great 'motion in de country; dey say de Yankee Fedralms is comin' off'm a ship, lyin' off de creek harbor. Marse Robert *he* storm and cuss like all-wrath. 'Tis 'stonishin' how gentlemens does learn to cuss when dey go to fightin'," said Mose.

"It's aisy for 'em to learn aivil rather than good, anywheres, I'm thinkin'," remarked Bridget.

"Mighty nigh right, dat is, I 'spec', missus. Marse Robert useter be as soft spoken as a lady wid a nice han', like a kid glove. He certain *did* blow de boys up'er tryin' to build a bridge dat ar' way, and made we all do it all over again. We got a whole stretch of pole clear 'cross de swamp, afore he lef', den he gallop away, and say of dey don't get anoder stretch 'longside of dat one, he's gwine to break every bone in dere bodies, he! he! Marse Robert's a good man, but I 'spec' de cannon balls gwine to cotch him like de minnow balls did dem nice young men dat went out wid him. It do seem strange like, dat ole creeters like me's lef', and young men, jes' ready to do good in de world taken out'n it," said Mose, reflectively.

He paused for an instant, as though indulging in memories of the past, and then resumed his cheerful tones.

"So you see, missus, you'll hev hope of gettin' to the home house day after to-morrow, ef nothin' happens, and we prosper."

"Thanks to your untiring energy," said Ellinor.

"He's worked by day, and watched by night, and the Lord knows what not, and ef he niver gits a reward on airth, may all good saints reward him in purgatory by takin' him out'n that same. And miss, ef you'd come and braithe a little air, we ain't afraid now Misther Mowse is here; the same will do ye good, I'm thinkin', I'll jist open the door, barrin' ther's no door to open, itself. Shure the breath of the air is fresh aud new entirely, like new vi'lets, and dewdrops, and nightingales and—oh, Lord! oh, Moses, and the saints! oh, hoo! och!" exclaimed Bridget, fall-

ing to the floor, and fairly rolling to Ellinor's side, and grasping her clothing, as if for protection.

Danger uttered a terrible growl, and rushed into the open air, while Mose quickly followed.

"Bridget, tell me, in mercy's name, what you have seen? You terrify me beyond expression," said Ellinor, trembling with vague apprehension.

"Expression! I'm *dead*, miss, and to think that it's happened *now* jist when good Mither Mowse has fix'd the powles. I'll niver look out *there* ag'in."

"Bridget, what have you seen?" again asked Ellinor.

"I've saine the whole Oshun Scarge! I've saine the scarge of the *world* itself. Och hone the day! I've saine a *man*!"

"Were you not in error, Bridget?" asked Ellinor.

"In *aror*, m'am!" exclaimed Bridget. "I niver was in that place in me life, not to my knowin'. I was in *here*, jist, in this haythen den of a place, barrin' me head was out, and I was sayin' to meself, Bridget, me garl, says I, you're in luck, you are, and I raised me eyes, jist, and there, and a-lookin' at me too, in the brown dusk, I saw the murtherin' pirate, as plain as the nose on me face, jist—and it's meself that has often wished that was less plain. Hivin' knows, but it makes little difference *now*. All the aivil seems to come belike, if iver I look out that blessed windy."

"By what unfortunate accident have they discovered our place of concealment?"

"In the same way we found it ourselves, by thramping and prowling 'round till they wore the faite of 'em cl'ane to the bone, I *hope* shure—they found it by accident. It's ounly the direst of accidents, that would bring any human crayther here. And the dear little bridge of powles two wide, and Mither Mowse's swate misthress that I began to love like me own dear sister, we'll niver see them now. Och hone!"

"Listen, Bridget."

"It's meself that's always doin' that same. I was born wid a talent for listenin' naterally, and of hearin', 'specially what I'd not wish to hear. And did ye iver hear sich a growlin' as that murtherin' hound ov a dog makes altogether!" questioned Bridget, as the noise without grew fearfully distinct.

Danger was growling furiously, and in low, smothered tones, expressive of the fiercest rage. He evidently held something in a deadly grasp. Mingled with these sounds was heard a voice uttering alternate entreaties and imprecations, while Mose's shrill tones were heard high above this confusion of sounds.

"Stay, Danger! Stay, sir! Down, good fellow," he exclaimed, as the noise paused at the door.

Mose first entered, and aided by Danger, drew after him the apparently lifeless form of a man. The dog's teeth were firmly fastened in the shoulder of the prisoner, and it was not until repeatedly urged and threatened by Mose, that he was induced to relinquish his hold.

Ellinor stood with clasped hands, unable to move or utter a word, while Bridget, in this extremity, gave utterance to the usual variety of lamentations.

The intruder was immediately recognized as belonging to the pirate crew, by the uniform he wore. He was without a hat, and his clothing partially torn away, while a deep wound in his shoulder, from which the blood flowed freely, attested the ferocity of the struggle in which he had been overpowered. He was nearly insensible, and his bushy hair and beard, dabbled in blood, caused him to present a truly frightful appearance.

Regardless of his wounds and insensibility, Mose proceeded to bind his prisoner firmly with leathern thongs, and when this object was securely accomplished, he exclaimed:

"Dar! you won't hurt us *now*, master, I reckon, and I s'pec' I'll keep you dar a little while. He! he!"

Danger had stood over the captive during the process of binding, evidently prepared, at the least signs of resistance, to renew the attack. He now evinced his satisfaction by playful gambols, and by rubbing his huge, bloody jaws upon Ellinor's clothing. Bridget was equally gratified at the prostrate condition of their foe, and her joy was equally demonstrative.

"Oh, ye bloody, murtherin' thafe ov a pirate! I know ye, bad luck to ye, and now ye'r' wher' ye ought to be, *jist*. I'll taich ye to cut women's and children's throats, and kill 'em wid scairen' of 'em to death itself!" she exclaimed, as, under assurance of his utter helplessness, she ventured to approach.

But as the movements of the captive indicated returning consciousness, she removed to a respectful distance.

"Come, missus," said Mose, turning to Ellinor, "we must run to de swamp. De whole place is filled wid 'em. I heerd de'r guns, like pepper an' salt, while we was draggin' dis yer' one down."

"Merciful Moses! Mother of saints, we're lost ag'in!" exclaimed Bridget, as, seizing Ellinor's arm, she fairly carried her up the steps, and rushed into the darkness.

The pirate moved uneasily, as though trying to rise.

"Jes' as well lie still, master; you can't get up, I s'pec', and you'll excuse me for leavin' you in dat fix; but some of your fr'on's will come along," said Mose, as he hurriedly followed the fugitives.

Danger had not waited for his keeper, but preceded Ellinor, as though to assure by his presence, and protect her from impending evils. Thus, but a few moments had elapsed since our party were dwelling with pleasure on their prospect of a speedy deliverance, and they were again, with fleeting footsteps and in terror, pursuing their way through the tangled mazes of the treacherous swamp.

"If we can jes' get on t'other side of de fu'st piece of de swamp, dey can't catch us, 'less'n dey knows more 'bout dis swamp than I thinks dey does," said Mose, in a low voice. "Dem poles is mighty small to walk on in de dark."

"Merciful saints! we'd as well be hung it-self by them bloody, murtherin' thaives ov pirates, as to be hung suspended between the hiven's and airth on two poles. It's worse nor a dancin'-master on wires it-self," exclaimed Bridget.

"It's strong, and ain't gwine to let you fall, missus. Little missus rather try it, I s'pec', for it's the only chance," replied Mose.

"Yes, oh, yes, anything rather than to fall into the hands of our pursuers!" exclaimed Ellinor, in agitated tones. "Hasten! I hear their footsteps in the rustle of every leaf."

"Lorrd love ye, they ain't in the laives itself, shure!" exclaimed Bridget, under the influence of new terror.

Soon the report of muskets was heard, and ere they reached the point where the foundation for the rude bridge was laid, Ellinor could scarce proceed, owing to the combined effect of terror and haste; and Bridget, after every ejaculation expressive of fright, vented her reproaches upon their persecutors.

"It's huntin' us like the mad hastes of the prayries they are. I'm thinkin' they've lost the'r raison itself, if they iver had any to lose at all, at all, barrin' the raison of cannybels, inste'd of men. 'Tis a new way intirely of pursuin' one's lady-love, an' so it is, and meself would like to hev the hearin' of his ears for a minit. I'd give him me opinion itself, would I."

Mose sought to soothe the alarm of the fugitives as best he could, while, in the intense darkness and by imperceptible paths, he led them onward.

"Don't you be oneasy, missus. Every step gits us further from 'em, an' ef we once git on dem poles, dey ain't never gwine to find us," said Mose, confidently.

"Shure, and won't they come onto the powles too, itself?" questioned Bridget.

"Trus' Mose for dat, missus," was the reply.

"How iver ye'r' to kape thim divils from crossin' anything human pable iver walked on, I don't know," said Bridget, incredulously.

"De fu'st bridge is a short one, and don't belong to de main bridge, nohow. It ain't but one length of poles—mighty long ones, dough—but after we've crossed I reckon we kin pull 'em after us afore dey gets dar," said Mose, as he paused a moment and groped in the darkness for the firm earth, upon which the foundation of the bridge rested.

The noble dog, however, was quickest, and with wonderful instinct, or, as it seemed, under the promptings of reason itself, as though he knew the object of their search, and comprehended its importance, he dashed forward, then, by whining and low, joyous barks, indicated that he had found the desired spot.

"If iver!" exclaimed Bridget. "The more I know that dog, and the better I like him, the more am I afraid of the crayther. He'll be afther sp'akin' presently, will he, the baiste. Oh! oh, mother of Moses, save us ag'in—they're here!"

This latter exclamation was caused by the report of a musket in alarming proximity. Ellinor whispered:

"We shall be too late! Our pursuers are upon us."

"Whist, spake niver a word itself, me darlint, or it's upon us they are," was Bridget's reply.

Their feet were upon the poles. It was a narrow and insecure footing, and swayed to and fro beneath their hastening footsteps, but they

were urged on by a strong motive power, and, although several times near falling from the frail support, they paused not until they gained the opposite side.

"It's meself will niver say ag'in I can't walk on the slack rope, or dance on the air itself, won't I, for afther *that same*. I'll niver deny I can't perform faites," said Bridget, as she set her foot firmly upon the ground, to be assured that it was in reality solid beneath her feet.

"I fear it will avail us naught, for I hear their voices on the opposite side," said Ellinor.

"Yes, missus, I hears 'em too, but, bress de Lord, chile, hearin' ain't always seein', and dey won't see us, I don't s'pec', to-night."

Mose drew a knife and cut the fastenings of the poles at his feet loose, then continued:

"Now, Miss Biddy, if you can help we'll soon sp'ile de bridge."

Then Bridget lent her strength to his assistance. They drew the long poles from the other side through the swampy bed until they rested upon the ground where they stood. This was accomplished quickly, although it required almost superhuman exertions.

"Howly Vargin! Things that seemed so small and light in the walkin'-on, pulls one terribly to lift. Will we be afther carryin' all the bridges afther us on our backs, Mither Mowse? It strikes me it would be a saving of time and labor itself, to be bringin' it wid us the first time we cross, then it's the divil himself couldn't find us at all, at all," said Bridget.

"We ain't got no more to pull away, missus, dey are a l too long and heavy," said Mose, not regarding Bridget's last suggestion, "but I s'pec' I'll cut de nex' one."

"Can they not follow us now?" asked Ellinor apprehensively.

"Dey ken try, missus, but I don't s'pec' dey'll exceed very well tryin', he! he!" laughed Mose.

The work was accomplished not a moment too soon, for, simultaneous with the complacent words of Mose, were heard shouts and cries of pursuit on the opposite side. The distance was so short that footsteps even were distinguished. On they came, nor paused at the edge of the swamp, and those first to advance lost their footing in the treacherous depths. Then followed angry shouts and calls to comrades for assistance.

Mose appeared to enjoy exceedingly the difficulties in which their unfeeling pursuers were literally plunged.

The fugitives were in no immediate danger of discovery, owing to the darkness, but, as the noise on the opposite side increased, the dog answered the shouts with a long, furious howl of defiance, which echoed far and near; and, ere the sound died away, a musket-ball whistled by, and fell harmless in the swamp behind.

"All the saints and praists itself pray for us now! Surely, they'll be killing us intirely wid them bastely cannons," exclaimed Bridget, electrified by this new and startling feature of pursuit. "It's meself thought, sure, we'd be safe from the murtherin' wretches till they caught us, but they'll be afther catching us now before they find us."

"Cease! Another shot, and your lives shall

pay the forfeit, villains. 'Tis but a shallow pool a child can cross. Advance!"

Ellinor recognized the voice of Robert Lynn, and felt indued with strength for renewed efforts.

Orders and threats were alike vain. The men became inextricably entangled in the depths of the swamp. Mose, who possessed all the inherent terror of the untrained negro, had received an additional incentive to action in the ball which had just whistled by; he therefore hastened onward, after giving the low, peculiar whistle which called Danger to his side.

"What wid the two powles ferninst us, and the innemy in our rare, and wid the crockydales under our feet, we'll have a night of it, so we will, and if we see the blissid morn at that, the Lord be praised. It's more than I xpict," said Bridget, dolefully, as she, pondering upon their dangers and difficulties, followed the swift footsteps of their sable guide.

"If we escape the perils which encompass us, we can never be sufficiently grateful," said Ellinor, in a low tone, for she scarce dare trust her voice.

"Niver!" exclaimed Bridget, energetically. "And it's meself that would never caise me prayers to the blissid saints all the days of me life."

CHAPTER X.

THE MORNING'S DAWN.

It was a night of terrors, and as our fugitives pressed onward, they occasionally heard the voices of their pursuers. These sounds, however, became less distinct and were finally lost in the distance.

They were in constant fear of the serpents which infested the swamp, their proximity to which was assured by the occasional barking and snapping of their watchful escort, Danger.

Bridget's loquacity deserted her under the accumulation of terrors, and she only occasionally found strength to utter a prayerful word of exclamation. Their way was partially accomplished when the moon's soft light shone full upon them.

"Hiven be praised!" ejaculated Bridget, as tears of thankfulness coursed down her cheeks. "I'd forgot the blissid light of the swate moon itself could iver shine on us more, b'aste ov a sinner that I am for that same."

A sigh of relief attested her gratitude, as Ellinor turned her eyes heavenward, for she was too greatly exhausted and overpowered for words.

The uneven, treacherous way could now be more confidently pursued, for threatening dangers could be seen, and perhaps averted. But every thing, however fearful, must end. The night was passed, and when the moon's pale beams were lost in the bright rays of the morning sun, the weary and worn fugitives paused at the last bridge. It spanned a stream, narrow, but deeper than any they had previously crossed. This was the boundary of the swamp, and beyond—oh! blessed sight to the longing eyes turned thitherward, lay cultivated fields and soft, shady groves.

Ellinor felt that, in her nervous and prostrate

condition, it was useless to attempt to cross on a support so narrow and difficult to traverse. Bridget protested against the attempt.

"It's niver a bit of use, that same, thryin' to cross *there*. Ye may walk on powles whin ye'r' surrounded, and can't git away, and thin in the swamp ye wouldn't fall so far itself, though crockydales, bad luck to 'em, will catch 'em ov here ther's nothin' to recaive ye, at all, at all, barrin' that murtherin' say ov a little river itself that's worse nor the say where ye have room to swim," argued Bridget.

"Dat's too high, missus," said Mose, reflectively. "We mus' manage some oder way, I reckon. I wonder whar's dem lazy niggers dis mornin'? I tole 'em to be here afore de broke ob day, so did Marse Robert. Boun' if he was here, he'd broke some of de'r heads. Dat's de way wid dem chaps. Dey dunno nothin' 'bout war," and, with an expression of supreme contempt, Mose looked in the direction whence his assistants were to make their appearance, not a little angry at their slothfulness.

"Shure, if they *do* come, they can't carry us over itself," said Bridget.

"No, missus, dat's de truf, but ef dey'd only come, I'd make 'em build a raf' in 'bout five minutes," replied Mose.

"Yes, dar dey is, wid jes' as much time afore 'em as ef it didn't take a whole week to make de world, and don't take more time to do all dat orter be done *in* de world, after it's done made," said Mose, as he witnessed their leisurely movements.

"As I live, it's a whole army of nagurs," exclaimed Bridget, who had no *penchant* for the unfortunate race.

"They have proved our friends, thus far," said Ellinor, reprovingly.

"Troth fer ye, mum, an' they have, an' it's no more than right to praise the bridge that carries ye over, if 'tis two powles, an' a nagur itself," was Bridget's reply.

"Hallo dar! you Ben, Bob, Caesar! Hallo, all of you lazy chaps!" hailed Mose.

But, intent upon their promenade, and evidently delighted with the musical efforts of a trio of the party, those addressed were insensible to the call, while the rich tones and peculiarly African intonation sounded on the morning air.

"De possum am a funny animal,
He rambles in de dark,
An' all he hev to 'sturb his mind.
Is to hear de ole dogs bark—"

"Hallo dar! what's *dat*?" exclaimed the foremost, suddenly stopping, as he saw the party on the opposite bank.

"Time you was askin', you lazy ragamuffins! Ef I was jes' dar, I'd make your eyes bigger'n dat," said Mose. "Now Bob, you go to de home house an' tell mist' de ladies here, an' you jis' be back here wid de carriage in less'n no time."

"How is you done fotch 'em here, Mose?" questioned the former speaker, gazing upon the party as one in a dream, his eyes and mouth distended to the utmost capacity.

"You hold your tongue, Pete," said Mose, "and shet up your eyes, an' go 'long wid dem boys, and have a raf' here in 'bout five minutes." Mose quickly crossed the frail structure and

superintended the construction of the raft, while all hands worked zealously, and cheerfully.

"How iver the nagur is to build boats wid his eyes shut, I'm sure I can't tell itself," said

meant that as a reproof for what he considered disrespectful scrutiny of strangers," said Ellinor, "not that he is to work with his eyes shut."

"The crayther *has* got manners, more'n some *paple*, and he's a jewel of a nagur, intirely, but I would like he'd be afther sayin' what he m'anes, or m'aning what he says, which is all the same I take it," said Bridget.

Ellinor and her attendant found a seat, and anxiously watched the process of construction. The negroes seemed accustomed to the supervising, also to the railings and reproofs of "Canebrake Mose," and before an hour had passed, a rough raft of unhewn logs, tied with green swamp withes, was launched upon the narrow stream.

"It's glad I am, meself, intirely, for I never felt the presintiment stronger afore nor better grounded, that somewhere beyant the fields, for the world like swate Ireland, barrin' it's not half so grane, and beyant the clumps of trees, there's a warrum breakfast, waitin' for its most humble servant," and Bridget sighed, for her strong physical nature hungered after "the good things of this world."

"I hope, Bridget, most earnestly, that you may enjoy a good breakfast, to console you for the terrors of the past night," said Ellinor, who pitied the physical suffering which she knew her faithful companion always endured when deprived of those comforts which constituted, for her, so large a portion of the enjoyments of life.

"An' it's meself that thinks *you'd* be better off, me darlint, if ye thought more of this same 'atin' and drinkin', and less of the graifs of yer life," said Bridget, seeming to divine her mistress's thoughts.

Danger never, for a moment, left Ellinor's side, and when they stepped on the raft, he demurely followed, and preceded them as they landed safely upon the opposite shore.

It was yet another hour, ere the carriage made its appearance, which it did slowly, and by a circuitous route.

"You see, missus," said Mose, in an explanatory tone, "I's sorry you's been waitin' so long, but it's a long way to de home house. De roads is mighty bad, and sence de war, dey's been used lesser dan ever, and got a heap worse, so I didn't 'spect he'd git the carriage here no sooner nobow."

But Mose appeared to think it was his province to reprove and admonish "in season and out of season," and he shouted to the stalwart driver as he came within hearing.

"I knowed you'd be all day 'bout it. Do come along, now you've got here."

The driver by a wondrous grin, displayed a double row of ivories, as with an air of bustling haste, he opened the carriage door, and drew down the steps, saying:

"Missus sent a horse for *you*, Uncle Mose."

"Don't 'spect you think I's got any eyes in my head, ef I can't see a boss as big as ole Bet.

Bound you ain't fed her sence I went away. She ain't nothin' but bones and skin," said Mose, as, with the air of a person conferring an immense favor, he received the bridle-rein which the driver meekly detached from the back of the carriage; then turning to Ellinor, he continued:

"Dar, little missus, is cushions and things; knowed missus would fix it right. Now you can res' and sleep as if ye was in a cradle, and you'll soon git home."

"Home!" How that word stirred her heart!

"A *cradhle!* shure, and ef it is, we're gettin' plenty of rockin', we are," exclaimed Bridget, as the carriage swayed to and fro, on the neglected, rain-washed road.

Slowly the carriage pursued its winding course, attended by Mose, who, probably with a view of reviving the spirits of the travelers, ceased not to reprove the delinquent Bob, not only concerning the condition of the aforesaid steed, but in regard to things in general, for which he appeared to hold the unfortunate wight responsible. The dog Danger, as if conscious of the important part he had acted in the rescue, also of the reception which awaited him at the journey's end, trotted beside the carriage, and by an occasional bark or whine, seemed to wish to remind its inmates of his continued presence.

"It's me warrum breakfast will become me dinner, in waitin' fer me, and me dinner itself will become could as a sthane I'm thinkin'," sighed Bridget, as they pursued their seemingly interminable way.

But soon after was Mose's voice heard.

"We're most dar. Dat's de home house," he exclaimed.

Bridget looked out of the windows anxiously. Just at that moment the carriage turned an angle, and the mansion and grounds, before hidden from view, lay before them.

"There it is, and as pretty a sight as the two eyes of me iver looked at."

Ellinor raised her eyes, and saw a picture, which was indeed beautiful to look upon. The home house was situated on gently rising ground, from which a well-kept park spread to the margin of a tiny stream, in which sported water-fowl of various descriptions. The house, itself, was low and irregularly built, as if at various times, and to suit the convenience of different occupants. It was surrounded by a broad piazza, which was scarcely elevated above the level of the greensward. From this, various doors and windows opened, descending to the floor. It was, altogether, a sweet, homelike scene, bearing evidence of wealth and refinement.

"Dar, dat's mist'," said Mose, as a lady made her appearance, and hastened to meet her guests. "An' dar's de chillun," he continued, as two curly-headed sprites ran down the graveled walk.

The carriage drew up at the steps. The lady took Ellinor's hands in her own, and pressing them tenderly, exclaimed, in accents of tenderest solicitude:

"How you have suffered, my poor, poor child!"

The soft eyes which gazed into her own were

filled with tears of love and sympathy; the arms which infolded her in a loving embrace clasped her so tenderly; Ellinor felt that at last she had reached a haven of rest. Again tears came to the relief of her overburdened heart, and she wept like a tired child upon its mother's breast.

CHAPTER XI.

HOME HOUSE.

MRS. CRANSTON, the mistress of home house, had once been an extremely beautiful woman, and although cares and the vicissitudes of life had left their traces, and marred the once exquisite beauty of form and feature, she was still attractive.

She possessed that beauty most to be prized, that unfading, rejuvenating charm, which ever wins admiration, that priceless treasure, a pure, true and loving heart. She ever sympathized with the unfortunate, and felt their woes as her own. Not with that bemoaning and despondent sympathy which many cultivate, and which leads them to cry out against the "world" and its evils, while they fold their hands quietly and resign themselves and the poor, belied "world" to its fate.

Her most active sympathies had been awakened and enlisted in favor of the fugitives, whose condition had been forcibly represented and faithfully depicted by Canabrake Mose. These feelings had, if possible, been augmented by the fact that she could neither relieve them immediately from their prison-house on the swamp island, nor personally sympathize with their griefs.

She felt it indeed a blessing to be able to relieve their pressing wants by sending delicacies and necessities, but she knew that even this must be, to a person of Ellinor's delicate constitution and refinement, scarce a moiety of the real needs of her nature, for, from the old negro's delineation, Mrs. Cranston had gained a faithful conception of the character and appearance of those who were to be her guests.

She had prayed for them nightly, while using the most untiring exertions for their relief, and folded her own darlings closely to her heart as she pictured them in a position so surrounded by terrors. She rejoiced that Ellinor and her companion were safe beneath her roof, but shuddered as she dwelt upon the adventures, and night of terror, which had caused them to anticipate, by such terrible flight, the efforts being made for their relief.

Mrs. Cranston accompanied Ellinor to the cheerful room, the preparation of which she had superintended for the accommodation of her guest, and personally ministered to her comfort. Her maid brought fresh garments, while the gentle hands of the kind hostess smoothed and arranged the entangled mass of shining hair.

She kindly insisted that Bridget should retire and seek the repose which she felt assured must be so greatly needed.

"Shure, an' it's meself that's restin' and reposin' now, at me aise, intirely," said Bridget, grateful for the proffer and the thoughtful kindness. "What wid sittin' on a chair, and bein' in a house wid doors and windys, and wid

Christian pape around, and wid me young leddy herself lookin' like *life*, and not like the painted picture ov distbress and dispair altogether, an' not wid a nest of crockydales, an' the howly saints knows what else besides, howlin' round and snappin' at me heels like hungry creditors—which last reminds me swate Ireland itself—I'm in a little taste of hiven upon 'arth, I belave," said Bridget, her eyes filled with tears of gratitude.

She had scarcely spoken since their arrival, and availed herself of the first opportunity to express her feelings.

"Look at her, poor crayther!" said Bridget, pointing to Ellinor.

Mrs. Cranston nodded smilingly, and placed her finger upon her lips, as she continued gently to smooth the bands of shining hair. Beneath the soft, magnetic touch, the weary eyelids had closed, and Ellinor slept—a gentle, refreshing slumber, not haunted by memory of the harrowing realities which had, until now, surrounded her, for, in her dreams, the slumberer smiled.

Mrs. Cranston gently drew the curtains, and seeming to know the greatest need of the matter-of-fact Bridget, led her away and placed her in charge of a servant, who soon set before her, she imagined, the identical "warrum breakfast, and the dinner which had not grown cold in the waiting." Bridget heartily and thankfully partook of the welcome feast, while Mrs. Cranston returned to watch beside the beautiful sleeper with the tender anxiety of a mother for a beloved child.

Ellinor slept long and well. The soft shadows had lengthened, and the rays of the setting sun peeped in at the closed blinds, as if for a farewell glance, when, with a grateful sense of security and repose, she awoke; yet with a luxurious, dreamy lingering in the soft realm of sleep, she lay with closed eyelids.

The first sound she heard was childish, prattling voices.

"Mamma, mayn't we come in?"

"Mamma, is the pretty lady awake? We've been ever so still," pleaded the little ones.

Mrs. Cranston signified her permission by an assenting gesture, and two fairy-like creatures drew noiselessly near and bent over the couch. As they did so, Ellinor opened her eyes, and, with the graceful presumption of those favored ones whose acts are always looked upon kindly by the indulgent eyes of love, the little ones laughed merrily, then withdrew to the other side of the couch and peeped forth from behind Mrs. Cranston's chair.

In accordance with her wishes, Bridget was informed when Ellinor awoke, and on entering the apartment, she found that her "young leddy" had arisen and was partaking of refreshments, at which highly judicious proceeding she signified her approval.

"Shure, an' ye can niver be yerself widout it. 'Ating kapes soul and body together, itself, so it does," said Bridget.

"Ah, yes. We will soon bring the bloom of health and its roses to her cheek, for I know they belong there," said Mrs. Cranston, smiling.

"Then you'll be better nor the spring rains,

that bring out the spring roses, itself, mum, so ye will," replied Bridget.

"It is neither right nor well to allow the griefs which fall to our lot to prey upon our health and spirits. We should ever strive against despondency, and against yielding to the pressure of misfortune." But, as Mrs. Cranston spoke her voice was tremulous, as if she had not, herself, been quite successful in the course which she would fain have her young friend pursue.

Two days passed—two days of blessed rest, of uninterrupted quiet. No terrors to startle, no sudden alarms to unnerve, and call into sudden and violent action every faculty of body and mind, and despite the grief of an orphaned heart, the aching void, for a father's place none other ever might fill, Ellinor fast regained her strength. Bridget never ceased to express her delight at the change, generally denouncing her peculiar aversion, "them thaivish pirates," and not forgetting the crockydales and that b'aste of a swamp," in her invectives upon the cause of their recent misfortunes.

The two little girls, twin children of Mrs. Cranston, became, in this short time, devotedly attached to Ellinor, and their wiles and pretty ways served oftenest to bring a smile to her lips, which event the little ones hailed with delight; for, children though they were, they seemed to feel by intuition that the beautiful stranger was suffering, and that even they could contribute their mite to cheer her.

Yet Ellinor could scarce feel secure from pursuit; they were but a few miles, as it were, removed from the harbor where the pirate vessel lay, and she still felt that this distance, which had cost them so much to accomplish, could be easily traversed by those she feared. She expressed her fears to Mrs. Cranston, who said:

"I will not deny, my dear, that your apprehensions may possibly not be without foundation; but it is a result I consider in the highest extreme improbable. Bold and lawless though the pirate crew may be, they will scarce dare to perpetrate such an outrage; besides, they are probably in ignorance of where you have taken refuge."

"I sincerely hope such may be the case," replied Ellinor.

"There is, also, another reason for feeling secure. The blockade-runners seldom remain long here in the harbor, for fear of detection, as this coast is often visited by blockading vessels, sometimes a whole fleet; but I think that this secluded harbor, and its occasional occupants, have, thus far, escaped notice. In the event of their being still in the harbor, I think we need have no fears."

"I thank you for the kind assurance, and will endeavor to feel your own confidence in our safety," said Ellinor.

"If," said Mrs. Cranston, "there is any course you can suggest, or any place which you can reach where you will feel assured of safety, I will use my best exertions to aid you; or, if you have friends with whom you wish to communicate, I have relatives holding influential positions, who will aid in forwarding letters to Europe, or to the Northern States,"

"I have no friends in America," said Ellinor, her eyes dim with tears, "save, indeed, the new friends who have been raised up in my need, who in a few short days have become inexpressibly dear, and to whom I owe so much."

"Nay, you owe nothing for a simple act of kindness, it has been a pleasure," said Mrs. Cranston.

"I believe it, my kindest friend. There is but one with whom I am anxious to communicate, under the present difficulty of transmitting letters. That friend was in Europe, and ordered on distant service."

Ellinor's cheek flushed, as she spoke of him whom she held so dear, then her heart saddened as she pictured his anxiety to know her fate when the news of the lost "Ellinor" should reach him. She continued:

"There is no place of greater safety at hand, and nowhere can I feel myself so happy as with you."

"Thanks, my dear girl," said Mrs. Cranston, affectionately. "Yet, much as your presence gives me pleasure, and earnestly as I hope to make you happy, I do not wish to sacrifice your safety, or even your feeling of security, that I may enjoy the selfish pleasure of having you near me. No city in this State is just now accessible from this point, and I know of no place at present which, more than this, promises safety."

Now that Ellinor and her companion were in comparative security, the humble instrument of their escape was not forgotten.

Every morning Canebrake Mose, who, now that the immediate incentive to active exertion had ceased, had resumed the bent form and decrepit appearance which had so alarmed the wanderers, as he bent over the brilliant blaze in his "den," came, leaning on his stick, to ask after the health and well-being "ob de ladies." Every morning he brought an offering of fih or game for the table, which was duly praised and appreciated, and this seemed to be the ample reward of this simple-hearted creature; the dolo he claimed of those he loved to serve. Ellinor never failed to bestow a kind word upon him who had so assiduously and effectually toiled to promote their comfort while dependent solely upon him in the wilds of the forest swamp.

"Mose is an original character," said Mrs. Cranston, at the termination of one of these visits. "He is very aged, and has long been exempt from service, but, I find him quite invaluable in my present condition. He devotes himself entirely to my interests, superintends the field labor, when not engaged in other matters, and informs himself, as if by magic, of any delinquencies on the part of the laborers, never failing to detect the offenders. His venerable appearance and eccentricities give him a power over the superstitious tendencies of the negro nature, and they yield a ready obedience to his every command."

"He evinces a delicacy of perception scarce to be expected of one in his station," said Ellinor, whose mind reverted to the dark hours passed in the cabin, on Swamp Island, and to the many acts of thoughtfulness which had tended so greatly to ameliorate their condition,

CHAPTER XII.

THE RETREAT INVADED.

It was a sunny morning. The members of the family at Home House, among whom we class the fugitives, who had here found a peaceful home, were grouped on the broad piazza.

Ellinor occupied the luxurious invalid's chair, which Mrs. Cranston insisted was still her prerogative. Bridget sat on the low step, leading to the lawn, busily occupied in dressing a waxen doll, which proceeding was eagerly watched by the smaller of the "wee things," those darling household pets. Her inseparable companion, for each was the accompanying shadow of the other, gambled on the soft grass beside the steps, with Danger, the animal seeming to enjoy the pastime exceedingly, while beyond, on a bench, rested the aged form of Canebrake Mose. He held in his hand the soft, dried grass of which he made those tiny baskets which had elicited Bridget's admiration on the morning after their arrival in his cabin.

He held one now in his hand, partially complete, but he did not seem intent upon his work, for ever and anon he raised his eyes, with an anxious, questioning glance to the face of his mistress.

Mrs. Cranston sat beside Ellinor. Her arms rested upon the low railing around the piazza, and her head sunk wearily upon her hand. Vacantly, as one who sees not, she gazed upon the scene before her.

The sky was clear and blue. Not a cloud rested upon the face of the heavens, and merrily the little songsters twittered in the stately branches overhead. Still, there was a dull, indistinct rumbling, as of the most distant thunder. Very faint it was, yet perceptible. Suddenly it became more distinct, and Bridget, seemingly the first to observe it, said:

"We'll be afther havin' a sthorm, I'm thinkin'."

"The noise you hear is not thunder," replied Mrs. Cranston.

"Not thundher itself! What is it thin, I'd like to know?" asked she.

"It is the report of cannon."

"Och, murther! Ow, oh! Blissid saints and angels defend us. Oh, sorry's the day I came from ould Ireland, itself. Oh! oh!"

Bridget let her work fall to the ground in her terror, and little Mina ruefully gathered the remains of her darling "best doll," which under Bridget's hands was fast becoming a tolerably dressed Irish peasant, all her artistic skill to the contrary notwithstanding.

Bridget saw the little one's sorrowful looks, and consoled her in the following original style:

"Sorry's the day I broke it, honey. But you'll be kilt wid them haythenish cannons, as my swate young leddy yonder and meself was, you and yer ma, Hiven bless her, and all yer purty toys and things, and thin ye'll niver want 'em more, the saints be praised."

Mrs. Cranston turned to Ellinor and said:

"It is as we suspected, my dear. Mose has learned that a party of Union troops landed a few miles up the coast, this morning, and that heavy skirmishing is now progressing."

"And the reports, which were like the rumbling of distant thunder, are becoming fearfully loud and distinct," replied Ellinor.

"Oh! for mercy, for this, our torn and bleeding country," Mrs. Cranston exclaimed. "How many hearts throb with the leaden weight of anguish, in this fair land, to-day. Mothers weeping for brave sons, sisters for beloved brothers, all refusing to be comforted, because the loved ones 'are not.' Where all, and every one is dear, the idol, perchance, of loving hearts, it seems selfish to pray that those we love may be restored to us again."

"Nay, not selfish, simply natural, my friend, and let me join my prayers to yours, for those you love, who share the perils of to-day," said Ellinor, earnestly.

"I have two brothers there. One a gentle youth, our mother's youngest, and our pride. May God preserve him, in this fearful day. And one, a stern, brave man, whose life is darkened by the one he dearly loved. Now, he recklessly seeks a fate, which shall, he deems, bring forgetfulness. May he be spared, to prize the holy gift he seeks to cast away," said Mrs. Cranston, in a low voice.

"That they may both be spared to make you happy, shall be my prayer," exclaimed Ellinor, in a voice of emotion.

Her heart was too full for words, and Mrs. Cranston took Ellinor's hands within her own, while they listened in prayerful silence, as, on the breath of the balmy morning air, the sounds were borne across smiling fields, which seemed, in their plenty, to protest against the blood-stained trampling of contending hosts, which soon should soil their purity.

The party at the heretofore peaceful home house obeyed the summons to dinner with saddened hearts, for each moment fuller and heavier came the deafening sound. The air seemed dull and close with its weight, as not a breath stirred the leaves, nor floated through the wide-open windows of the dining hall.

A leaden weight pressed their spirits. The little pets sat as usual, one on either side of the hostess, but seemed to share the general gloom, for they demurely received the choice bits laid upon their plates, without a word of the pleasant prattle with which they were wont to enliven the table reunions.

When they returned to the piazza, Mose sat on the step, and he arose with a grave expression on his withered countenance, as the ladies approached.

"Dem things is comin' nearer, mist'," he said, as with a thumb he pointed over his shoulder, in the direction whence the sound proceeded.

"Yes, they are fast approaching, and I feel powerless to aid myself or others," said Mrs. Cranston.

"I dunno, myself, what ken be done, mist'. You see dey begun at the Inlet 'fore day, and dey've been spreadin' out, faster'n a horse can travel, I s'pose, in de shape of a half-moon like, and all dis country is jes' in de band, and I dunno how to get out," said Mose.

"They may not reach this place," suggested Mrs. Cranston.

"Dey's a heap nearer dan you thinks for now, missus. When dey stops fightin' to-night dey

won't be more'n five miles off," said Mose, confidently. "I dunno whether it's de gray-coats, or de blue-coats nearest. Dey say dey's been fightin' hand and hand all day, and it's most like we'll get mashed between 'em, an' we won't know whether t'other or which did it," said Mose, reflectively.

Canebrake Mose, the resort in all cases of trouble, failed in this dilemma. They were, as Mrs. Cranston said, helples; in this emergency. In silence, and with heavy forebodings at heart, they awaited the approach of night. Long and weary were the hours in passing, yet more to be feared were the approaching ones.

The sun set at last upon that day of carnage. Men lay across each other at the contested guns, with the fierce emotions of the bloody fray fixed on their stiffened lips. Friend and foe together, in an almost inseparable confusion, and when the twinkling stars bespangled the southern sky, they looked upon the faces of the dead.

Men who had once met in the common courtesies of business and pleasure, who had held each other's hands in friendly clasp, met now, pale and worn, upon the battle-field, to bury each his dead, then turned away to meet on the morrow in a deadly strife for mastery.

The tinkling of the supper-bell that night at Mrs. Cranston's hospitable mansion smote upon the ears of its hearers with startling effect. It seemed unnatural, almost wrong, to these sensitive hearts, that the daily routine of life, however necessary, should continue, when, but a short distance removed, as it were, there was so much suffering, for they knew that in impromptu hospitals to-night, stern men groaned in agony, and sighed for the "loved ones at home," whose faces they might never more behold.

The little ones had not as usual been submitted to the hands of their nurse for the night. The mother had felt that she could not in this hour separate from them for a moment. She took the hand of one of the little girls and arose from her seat, saying:

"Come, my friend, we must partake of our evening meal, if possible. We may need every support to meet some emergency ere to-morrow."

Ellinor took the hand of the little one, that had that evening nestled by her side, and followed her hostess.

They sat long at table, and conversed in low tones, as though fearing to go into the clear night air, or to look at the starry heavens. Nature seemed freighted with a weight of woe.

"The bloody pirates, neither by land nor say, which is the same, I take it, shall ch'ate me out ov me warrum supper; there's no tellin' whin I'll git another."

With this sage and defiant reasoning, Bridget proceeded to do herself and the waiting supper justice.

Ellinor did not forget the morsel which she was accustomed to bestow on her canine friend, after each meal, and Danger received his portion with his usual tokens of approbation, while Canebrake Mose looked on. Then Danger caressed her hands, and lay at her feet, as he did in the dreary den at Swamp Island, when he had been her ablest protector, and Ellinor felt reassured by the presence of the noble beast—

still brave as ever in her defense, but unequal, in his brute force, to the peril of the coming night.

"Mose, do you never weary at your post?" asked his mistress. "It is time for your supper."

"Thanky, mist'; I was thinkin' 'bout suffin' else. You see, folks is got different ways; some runs away when the sojers comes; dey is 'fraid of 'em, and den de sojers plays de mischief. Some folks tells 'em dey can't have nothin' to eat, an' dat's de first thing dey wants, and if dey won't give 'em something to eat, den dey plays mischief; so I'd just have the table sot wid de best in de house, and let 'em eat as long as you've got anything, and dat's de only way to make 'em behave."

Mrs. Cranston followed the advice of Mose, and had her house "swept and garnished," for whom she knew not. Ere this arrangement was complete, the world was ablaze with the camp-fires of the contending armies, now in repose. They dotted the hill-sides and skirted the wood, and seemingly, lest the beholder might forget the stern realities of war in this beautiful sight, ever and anon the deep-toned cannon sounded its dread alarm, vibrating over the hill-sides, far and near, until lost in the echoing distance.

Mose soon dispatched his supper, and returned to his seat.

"You see, mist'," said he, "I knows some on 'em is sure to come, so near camp as dis yer is, and I thinks dat's de best way to treat 'em. It ain't many men can behave harsh to ladies, 'special if dey treats 'em kind, and den' you see mist', most all on 'em's got somebody at home, and thinkin' of 'em sometimes makes gen'men of de roughest of de sojers."

Mose was ignorant and untutored, but he was a judge of human nature, and he knew that the man who failed to feel his heart soft: n either by a memory of home, or—pardon the abrupt transition—a good supper, must indeed be hardened, and the cunning calculator resolved that the lawless men who should, on that memorable night, invade the sanctity of his beloved mistress's peaceful home, should feel the influence of the two great motive powers of humanity combined.

The camp-fires burned brightly, and the night advanced; still the anxious watchers remained upon the piazza. Suddenly lights were seen at a near point, and in a different direction from the camp-fires.

"I'll jes' go an' see who dat is; don't like dat," said Mose, as he arose and suddenly disappeared among the shadows.

A little time the expectant party sat in silence; slowly and with cautious fear, one after another of the affrighted servants came, and as if seeking security in their mistress's presence, stood, some in the recesses of the windows, and some in the doors, in every attitude of fear and expectation, every one having his or her account to give of the cause of their fear. Some affirmed that they had seen the guns of the approaching party, others that they had seen the glistening of terrible eyes, "brighter than stars," when mammy Sue silenced them all, by exclaiming, in tones of contempt:

"Hush! you all skeert to def, and ain't seen nuffin'; jis' heard me say I's see'd suffin'."

And mammy Sue, with the privilege of the oldest, ensconced herself in what she considered the *safest* point, namely, behind the chair of her mistress, and in grim silence awaited the coming of events.

A hastily-advancing footstep was heard, which all recognized as that of Canebrake Mose. He ran up the walk and exclaimed, breathless with haste:

"Gor'mighty! dey's comin', mist'!"

"Who are coming?" questioned Mrs. Cranstons.

"Dey! dem! De Scourgers, mist', what cotch Miss Ellinor!"

CHAPTER XIII.

PURSUIT BAFFLED.

WHILE Ellinor Vannier and the devoted Bridget were prisoners in the cabin of the "Ocean Scourge," also during their escape from the pirate chief, and the eventful days that followed, the "Union Flag" commanded by Captain Armstrong, with Will Brande at the helm, glass in hand, had cruised along the coast in search of their outlaw enemy.

Captain Vannier was slowly recovering from the effects of his wound, and every day of this enjoined inactivity seemed to him an age, while Captain Armstrong chafed like a caged lion at every hour which passed bringing no tidings, and which seemed to remove him further from the accomplishment of the object for which he was prepared to yield his life.

At length a suspicious sail was reported, and Will Brande, after long scrutiny, satisfied himself that this was indeed the long-sought "Scourge," then gave vent to his joy in a hearty "harrab!" He turned to Captain Armstrong, and said:

"That's her, and no mistake, sir, and we've got her about right. We'll lay this neck of land that runs into the bay under our guns, and she'll keep beautiful till morning, leastways, that's my 'pinion."

"Must we delay action until morning?" asked Captain Armstrong, who felt that, in this instance, it were well to be influenced by the opinion of the seaman.

"Yes, sir, *safe* must be the word; it's too late now, and we must not let the outlaws know we are about till we are ready for action."

Captain Armstrong felt the force of this reasoning, as night was already near.

"Patience, oh, my soul!" he muttered between his clinched teeth, as, assuming a serenity which was far from real, he descended to the cabin to report to Captain Vannier the progress of events, and assure him of success on the morrow.

Then they discussed at length the proposed plan of operations. They must deal gently with their enemy for her sake, whom they sought to save. The Scourge was to be disabled, then boarded, and the pirates engaged hand-to-hand upon her decks.

Now Captain Vannier felt his debility and wounds with double force. He alone to remain inactive on the morrow, while others shed their blood for the rescue of his beloved

child, if, indeed, that might avail to restore her to his arms. And the father's heart sunk with sickening forebodings, as he pictured all the terrors of her situation since that fearful night.

Alone, save her faithful attendant, among that rough pirate crew; she, so tenderly cared for, so sedulously guarded against contact with the coarser elements of human nature. Had not his gentle child died of despair? He shuddered as he dwelt upon the possible contingencies that might have arisen in her captivity.

While the guns of the "Flag" protected the narrow and apparently the only outlet to the harbor, where the pirate lay, and where the utmost vigilance was exerted to prevent her escape, the "Ocean Scourge," under cover of the darkness of night, silently entered the small inlet beyond, and lay concealed from her pursuers.

Robert Lynne, the pirate chief, felt that he was safe, but he knew not that the vessel on his track was guided by an unerring hand, which should never relax its vigilance until the ashes of the "Ocean Scourge" were scattered as an atoning sacrifice upon the broad blue sea.

Long ere the dawn of day, all was excitement on the decks of the Flag. The strict discipline of the man-of-war had, for the moment, yielded to the enthusiasm of the men in the cheerful bustle of preparation and eagerness for the fray. The nature of the excitement, however, was changed when Will Brande, in the first faint dawn of day, took the glass in his hand, and after a few moments' search turned to Captain Armstrong, who approached, and said slowly and with emphasis:

"*She's gone, sir!*"

Captain Armstrong seized the glass and swept the narrow limits of the bay, then the broad expanse of waters, only to receive confirmation of these words; then, with an expression of rage and incredulity, he turned away. He felt in the impotent despair of that moment that Ellinor was lost to him forever.

His inaction, however, was of short duration; and when, a short time after, a sail was discovered, he ordered chase to be given, as though assured of what he so desired, yet of which he could find no ground for hope, that the foe he sought was fleeing before him.

Will Brande, with a rueful expression of countenance, again took the glass, and gazed wistfully at the fast receding spot where the night before the missing vessel lay; then he said to Captain Armstrong, in an excited voice:

"Cap'n, that *cussed* vessel never came out o' there!"

This was the strongest form of an oath Will ever used, profane as were most of his companions, and this word betokened the strongest excitement on the part of the speaker.

Although his freedom from this vicious habit caused officers and men to respect Will more highly, there were a few who had ventured to jest with him on the subject, and one, more lawless than his fellows, once called him "parson."

"Now look here, comrades," said Will, "a joke's a joke, I s'pose, and I can take my share on 'em; but I had a mother once, and perhaps

I'd had one now if I'd been a better son; but one of the few of her teachings I remember was the third commandment, and don't you never say nothin' ag'in' it."

From that day they had never dared jest with Will on the subject of his conscientious scruples.

"No, cap'n, she never come out o' *there*," repeated Will.

"She is not in the bay, Will. Where is she, then?" asked Captain Armstrong.

"No more'n she ain't *there*, cap'n," said Will, slowly, as if reluctant to admit the evident fact. "She's gone up, or down, for all I know, but she ain't gone out. Leastways, that's my 'pinion."

The chaso was continued for hours, when the "sail" was recognized as one of the blockading squadron, and signals were exchanged.

Several days were passed in searching every cove and inlet which indented the coast for miles above and below, where it was possible that the object of their search might lie concealed, but with no success, and the Flag again lay at the point from which the Scourge had last been seen at anchor, and from which she had so mysteriously disappeared.

"Now, cap'n, the Scourge has never left this bay. If she had, we'd have caught her a dozen times in the last two days," said Will, as again he scanned the limits of the narrow expanse before them.

Captain Armstrong made no reply, for in refutation of Will's theory there lay the clear bay, sparkling in the sunlight, unmarred by even a speck upon its surface. Will continued silent, but still intently gazing in the same direction.

"This inaction, this perfect helplessness, is unbearable," exclaimed Captain Armstrong.

"Well, cap'n, you're about right. It's for all the world like bein' tied up and kickin' at nothin'. Cap'n, I have a new idea, and if you'll give me half a dozen men to-night, I'll see if something won't come of it."

"You can select for yourself, Will," said the captain. He possessed unbounded confidence in Will's sagacity, and knew that there was scarcely a man among the crew who would not be anxious to join the expedition. They were ready for any enterprise, however hazardous.

Captain Armstrong did not question Will as to his plans, but anxiously awaited the return of the boat containing the little party.

The night was already passed, and the first faint streaks of light were discernible in the east, when Will's boat came alongside.

"Ah! I told you so, cap'n! We've found her, boys. She ain't near enough to hear us, so give her three cheers," and Will led off, "three times three," heartily given. Then, not waiting to answer questions, he ran with boyish agility below, to inform Captain Vannier of their success.

"You see, cap'n, in a place that from here looks like nothin' more than a stream as big as your arm, if seen at all, runs the completest little outlet or inlet, just wide enough for a vessel, and deep, and there, just like turnin' a corner, lies the Scourge, in the completest little cove, all in the moonlight. She was the prettiest, most joyful sight I ever sot eyes on," said Will, enthusiastically.

His plan was a simple one—they were to set sail slowly outward, to avoid giving alarm, and at the approach of night, return to their present position, from which they were to proceed in boats, and surprise the pirate crew in their fancied security.

"Thus," said Will, "they will be in our power, and, if the young lady is there, they will have no chance to carry her off, which they might do if they had time."

The advantages which Will's plan possessed were evident to all, and it was adopted. The "Flag" stood out to sea for hours, but at nightfall resumed her position of the morning, and, as early as expedient, the expedition set forth.

Their plans were admirably executed, for, not an hour had elapsed since, on entering the narrow strait, they had seen the object of their search, as Will described, lying before them, ere their boats were moored noiselessly alongside the "Scourge."

The victory was an easy one, for a few men, left in charge of the vessel, were all on board. Surprised at meeting with so little resistance, Captain Armstrong, with heavy forebodings at heart, instituted search for Ellinor. It was, however, in vain. Will Brande, meantime, questioned the captives, who were lying securely bound upon the deck. From them he learned of Miss Vannier's escape, and the rage of their captain, when, on his return, he was informed of the flight of his captives.

They informed Will that, having on that day received information of her place of concealment, the captain had a short time since set out on an expedition to recapture the fugitives; that his object was to return ere midnight, and escape to sea before the armed vessels, which were operating in conjunction with the land forces above, should reach that point. He had prolonged his stay in the harbor, making futile searches for Miss Vannier, for he believed it impossible for her to have made her escape from the swamp. With a fearful oath he swore that he would be taken with his crew ere he would relinquish his purpose.

They offered to lead them to the place for which the expedition under their captain had set out, uttering an oath of vengeance on their leader, who for his own purposes had sacrificed his men.

After short deliberation, Captain Armstrong decided to accept one of the captives as a guide. It was true, he might be treacherous, and betray them into the hands of their enemies, but again he might enable them to save Ellinor from the power of the pirate chief.

They entered their boats, and rowed around the treacherous swamp-island, where Ellinor and her companion had so suffered in their wanderings and escape.

Soon they were hastening forward under their new guide toward the home house, where their arrival was most opportune, and will be demonstrated by the events of the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

THE announcement made by Mose, in his original words and manner, produced varied results upon his hearers.

Ellinor started to her feet in terror, as if to flee from her dreaded enemy. She was pale, and every feature expressed the despair in her heart.

Bridget seized the little ones in each hand, and retreated hastily within the house.

"Go within, my dear," said Mrs. Cranston.

"And leave you to face the terrible men?" exclaimed Ellinor.

"I do not fear them, my child," replied her hostess, as she led Ellinor within, and closed the door.

"Now, my dear," said she, "go to the east room up-stairs, that is the most distant. They may be deterred from their purpose, and, if not, much may be gained by delay."

"Och hone! Who'd iver ov thought ov a vessel sailin' on dry land, itself? but it's that divil of a Say Scarge that'll sail anywhere, bad luck to it," exclaimed Bridget, aghast at this new misfortune.

Mrs. Cranston resumed her seat, as a footstep was heard upon the walk. The intruder was met a few steps from the piazza by Mose, who, with a low bow, asked his "pleasure."

"The mistress of the house," was the curt rejoinder.

"Walk in sar," said Mose, indicating the way, and stepping aside to allow him to pass.

Mrs. Cranston arose to meet her visitor, who, as the reader has doubtless surmised, was Robert Lynne, the captain of the "Ocean Scourge." He bowed with overwrought courtesy, and said:

"Can I have the pleasure of a few moments' conversation, madam?"

"Certainly, sir," said Mrs. Cranston, as she pointed to a chair near the one from which she had arisen upon his entrance.

The lawless man was abashed by the presence of this frail woman, but every moment was precious, was life itself, and he spoke.

"Madam, at great sacrifice, and imminent personal danger, I am here to-night, to seek one who is now a guest beneath your roof."

"By what means are strangers informed who are my guests?" asked Mrs. Cranston, calmly.

Robert Lynne paused and scanned the questioner, but he saw no signs of timidity or fear in the gentle hazel eyes, which returned his gaze.

"Madam," he said, "the person I seek I come prepared to claim, and I beg that you will not oppose my intentions in this respect, and as one who wishes you no ill, I advise you against such a course of proceeding. I could give you explanations which would be doubtless satisfactory, but time presses, and urgent duties call me elsewhere."

"Doubtless. None are exempt from pressing duties. One of the most sacred of which I am cognizant is the duty of a hostess to her guest," replied Mrs. Cranston.

"Madam, will you inform Miss Vannier of the presence of a friend, who requests her to accompany him?" questioned Captain Lynne, in a tone of suppressed rage.

"Captain Lynne—for, although you have not given me your name, I feel confident that I address no other—Miss Vannier is my guest, and

under my protection, inefficient as that protection may be," replied Mrs. Cranston.

"I can waste words no longer, madam. You compel me to use means I would fain have avoided," exclaimed Robert Lynne, as he arose from his chair. "I must and will see Miss Vannier."

"Since this is your ultimatum, you must adopt your own course, and, under the circumstances, will doubtless permit me to withdraw."

Mrs. Cranston gracefully saluted her visitor, and ere he could detain her, she entered the hall and passed from his sight.

She hastened to the room where Ellinor sat in silence and fear, her face buried in her hands.

"He is a villain of the deepest dye, my dear, and I can comprehend your aversion to falling into his power. Our conversation was but short, and I gained but little time, but I do not despair of saving you," Mrs. Cranston said, as she noted the terrified expression of the young girl's face, for at that moment Robert Lynne's voice was heard, summoning his followers.

Mose had been politic, and, while the captain was conversing with Mrs. Cranston, he had invited the men to partake of refreshments. They had entered by another door, and were now seated at a feast, such a one as seldom fell to their lot to enjoy.

Their captain called again, ere they answered the summons, then Mose appeared at the door.

"Please, Mas'r Cap'n, de mens is takin' a little supper, and a little drop of suffa."

"Supper! curses on them, and on you too," exclaimed the enraged officer.

"Let him call, we're ashore now; we've answered him often enough. Let's drink another glass," said one of the men.

"Pitty to lef now. Two or free minutes ain't much, nobow," suggested Mose.

"Sensible fool, that," exclaimed one of the outlaws. "There, old boy, take the crusts and bones for your pains."

"Yah! ha!" laughed Mose, as though the speaker had perpetrated an exquisite jest. "Yes, sah. Thanky, sar."

"A good-natured fool, too," continued the speaker. "Fill us again, old boy, and we'll be gone. They *might* catch us, and you know we're the swingin' sort, ha! ha!" and he drained his glass with a hideous gesture, in imitation of strangulation by the rope.

"Confound you! I'll have you hung for mutiny, if you hesitate another moment. Have the horses in readiness. And now tell me where to find Miss Vannier."

Robert Lynne had appeared at the door of the refreshment-room, and his concluding words were addressed to Mose.

"Miss Ellinor? dat pretty lady what's stayin' wid mist'?" questioned Mose.

"Yes, dotard!"

"Bress me! I didn't know you was *her* fr'en's. Scuse me, sar, won't you walk in and take some 'freshments and wine, sar?" asked Mose, as he hobbled back to the door, from which he had gone a few paces.

Mose's bodily infirmities had increased to a surprising extent. He was very lame.

This offer of hospitality, made with an air of

genuine sincerity by the old negro, exasperated the pirate chief to the last degree.

"Look ye," exclaimed he, shaking Mose roughly. "Your mistress has wasted time that is precious to me, and, if you continue, it will be the worse for you."

"Lor', mas'r! jes' tell me what you wants. I didn't know you an' mist' had any words," said Mose, in submissive tones.

"Where is Miss Vannier?" asked the outlaw.

"Ef you was to kill me, mas'r, I *don't know*," replied Mose.

This was literally a truth; Mose did not *know*, but he could make a shrewd guess as to Miss Vannier's whereabouts.

"Deed I don't know, mas'r, but she's in de house, I 'spec'," he continued.

"Show me her apartment."

"Yes, sah, yes, mas'r," replied Mose with alacrity, but his progress as he toiled up the staircase was extremely slow and tedious.

Miss Vannier's room was furthest from that in which she had taken refuge, and, as they passed a particular window, Mose accelerated his steps, for he did not wish the captain to become cognizant of a fact which he had known for some time. Across the open fields at a distance, yet plainly visible in the clear night, there was a body of men approaching.

After searching where he least expected to find her, Mose was at last forced to approach the room where he felt confident Miss Vannier would be found. The door was locked.

"Ah! they are here, doubtless, and you have purposely misled me, villain," exclaimed Robert Lynne.

"I dunno as dey're *here*, mas'r," replied Mose.

"We'll soon see."

Exerting his entire strength, the powerful man threw himself against the door, which yielded to his efforts. Robert Lynne paused for an instant, as he looked upon the scene.

Ellinor sat in a chair. She was pale as marble, and seemed as lifeless in her despair.

Mrs. Cranston stood beside the terrified girl, her naturally calm features, and soft eyes, speaking the indignant emotions which she had no words to express, and at Ellinor's feet lay the dog Danger, unobserved in the confusion.

Bridget sat upon the floor, with both the little girls clasped in her arms, rocking, violently, to and fro, and not forgetting her usual custom of imploring the aid of the saints in the calendar.

"Ellinor, you know the purpose for which I come. You must accompany me, said Robert Lynne.

"Never," was the only word of reply, spoken in a low but firm voice.

The pirate advanced a step, and Danger uttered a low, defiant growl.

"Heavens! to be opposed in my purpose by the very brutes. Ellinor, why do you tamper with me thus? My will shall be your law in this. In all other things, I am your slave."

Ellinor Vannier did not reply, and again Danger uttered his warning.

"Yis, 'the brute,' heaven bless him, he's more human nor yerself," exclaimed Bridget. "But ye'd betther see what yer murtherin' thaives are

doin'. They're breakin' aich other's heads, I'm thinkin'."

The confusion below had increased, and was now mingled with oaths and blows.

"Mutinous curs!" exclaimed Robert Lynne, as he turned from the apartment. "I'll silence you."

He did not succeed, however, for the noise became deafening, and in a few moments Mose entered the room.

"It's de blue coats got hold of 'em, and dey is fightin' all over de yard, too. Ef dey only can drive dem Scourgers off we'll have de road clear ag'in, bress de Lord!" he ejaculated.

Long, it seemed to the anxious listeners, did the strife continue. At last a quick step was heard, and again Robert Lynne entered the room.

"They have overpowered us," he said.

"Thank Heaven!" fervently ejaculated Ellinor.

"But, you shall not escape," continued he, fixing his eyes upon her face. "In life or in death you shall be mine, I have sworn it."

The noble girl quailed not beneath his gaze, and in her voice there was no token of fear, as she replied:

"To die, were better far, than to live, your slave!"

He drew nearer; the dog sprung with sudden force upon the pirate chief, and buried his fangs deep in his shoulder. The struggle was but short, and soon the noble animal fell at the feet of her whom he had died to save.

The shrieks of Bridget and the affrighted servants, who had taken refuge here during the conflict, now rose high above every other sound. Footsteps hastily approached, but, ere they reached the scene, Robert Lynne drew near again, and as he grasped Ellinor's hands, exclaimed:

"Yes, die by my hand. You shall not live blessed by another's love."

Ellinor raised her eyes to heaven, but, ere the upraised dagger descended, a sharp report was heard, and Robert Lynne fell, mortally wounded.

The noble girl had bravely endured every extreme of terror, but the transition to joy was overpowering, and she sunk insensible into the arms extended to receive her.

Robert Lynne turned his eyes upon the face of the avenging foe, by whose hand he had fallen, and he murmured:

"Frederick Armstrong! hated in life—hated in—death!"

The pirate chief was no more!

There was another party, wending its way up the broad avenue, leading to the home house. They proceeded slowly, for they carried a burden.

Mose entered the room, where his mistress bent over the still insensible form of her young friend, and spoke to her in a low tone. She hastily arose, and down the stairs, through the long corridor she sped, heading not the ghastly form beneath her feet.

Along the graveled walk, and across the lawn—she paused not, until she met the advancing party. Then a tall man clasped her in his arms, and she asked, in anxious tones:

"Brother, is he dead?"

"Not dead, my sister, but he was severely wounded yesterday, and he is maimed for life," was the reply.

How her heart leaped with joy. Although sick and wounded, nearly unto death, he *lived*, and with a sister's love for their best beloved, she could surely win him back to health and joy again. She bent over the litter, and pressed her lips to the pallid brow. There were no words, but the sufferer responded to her caress, and her eyes were filled with tears of thankfulness.

A few moments later Mrs. Cranston reëntered the room, which had been the scene of the thrilling events of the night. She was accompanied by a man of noble form and face. He advanced to Captain Armstrong, and with his features expressing the deepest emotion, extended his hand, saying:

"Sir, we are foes—'by practice'—not 'by nature,' let us hope. You have this night protected those dearest to me. Let us be friends, and allow me to thank you."

"Let us be friends," repeated Captain Armstrong, as he warmly grasped the extended hand, "most cheerfully. But I cannot allow you to thank me for a service, which I fear you will deem essentially a selfish one, when I tell you, that it brings its own reward."

Bridget sat on the floor beside her mistress, laughing and weeping hysterically, while poor Canebrake Mose wept over the dead body of his faithful Danger. There was little time, now, to devote to words, or the expression of any emotion, which might agitate the bosoms of those present at this eventful hour. There was scarce time for the farewells, which must be spoken. Captain Armstrong must hasten to regain the "Flag," and Colonel Hansford wished to remove his sister's family and his wounded brother far from this place, which would, on the morrow, witness the renewed strife.

Ellinor did not forget the faithful Mose. As he pressed the hand of the negro at parting, Captain Armstrong left there a substantial evidence of his appreciation.

Mose looked at the gift sorrowfully.

"I didn't *want* no money, mas'r," he said, as his eyes turned toward his dead favorite. "All I done was with free will, sir, 'deed it was."

"I know it," said Captain Armstrong. "This is merely a gift, no payment for your services; they are invaluable."

Ellinor wept over poor Danger, as she patted his silky coat, and bade his lifeless form a silent adieu.

Bridget was far from insensible to the claims upon her gratitude, and she wept as she exclaimed:

"Och hone! that iver I should feel so much graife at parting wid an old nagur, itself, and a dead dog! Sorry's the day altogether, that they kilt him; but we'll not graive that he's betther off, the b'aiste!"

Beside the litter, on which they bore the wounded youth, men who might, perchance, never meet again, or who might, ere the setting of to-morrow's sun, encounter in the deadly strife, now clasped each other's hands and bade a silent farewell.

Ellinor Vannier threw herself into the arms of

the friend who had been so kind to her in the day of need, weeping convulsively. As the parting kiss was pressed upon her lips, she murmured:

"My heart assures me that we shall meet again."

"Let us hope that we may be reunited; and that our unhappy land may smile once again amid the blessings of peace, let us pray."

As Mrs. Cranston spoke these words, she raised her eyes to heaven, and with bowed heads they stood a moment in silence.

They parted with the echo of this prayer within their hearts.

We will not dwell upon the meeting between Captain Vannier and his rescued child.

At the moment when Ellinor stepped on the deck of the Flag, and was received in her father's arms, a lurid light shone on the clear waters of the bay, and far beyond upon the open sea, tall spires of flame darted toward the sky, and a terrific explosion rent the air. This was the farewell scene that told the fate of the Ocean Scourge.

THE END.

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